



The
DREADNOUGHT
BOYS on
A SUBMARINE
CAPTAIN WILBUR LAWTON

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HE CAUGHT THE ASTONISHED TAR BY THE SCRUFF OF THE
NECK AND THE SLACK OF HIS TROUSERS.

—Page 26.

THE DREADNOUGHT BOYS ON A SUBMARINE

BY

CAPTAIN WILBUR LAWTON

AUTHOR OF "THE BOY AVIATORS SERIES," "THE DREADNOUGHT BOYS
ON BATTLE PRACTICE," "THE DREADNOUGHT BOYS
ABOARD A DESTROYER," ETC., ETC.

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The Dreadnought Boys On a Submarine.

CHAPTER I.

UNCLE SAM GETS FIRST CALL.

"So your final answer is no?"

"Yes. And with a big N, Mr. Ferriss. I have put my best work of head and hand into the Lockyer submarine, and Uncle Sam gets first call on her services."

"You remind me of a copy book with your sentimental morality," sneered Jasper Ferriss, with the bitter inflection of a man who has fought a losing fight and knows it.

"Why," he went on persuasively, "you know as well as I do that the government is notoriously slow pay. By the time the red tape is unwound

at Washington you'll be penniless, and the boat a rust-eaten wreck. Our concern, on the other hand, offers you a fat figure, down on the nail. Come, say the word and I'll write you a check now."

"Don't trouble yourself, Mr. Ferriss," smiled Channing Lockyer, as the other's be-diamonded hand sought his breast pocket to produce his check book—the magic volume which could have told many tales of its adventures with Jasper Ferriss.

"My answer to you and your concern regarding your proposition is *No*,—first, last and all the time," he went on.

"Why?"

Jasper Ferriss was angered. Despite his experience and skill in putting through all manner of "deals" requiring the exercise of the nicest diplomacy, he could not help showing his chagrin. He showed it in the way his black brows contracted till they met in one thick band across his puffy, florid countenance. Showed it, too, in the quick way in which he rubbed his blue, clean-

shaven chin, with its triple folds of fat, and in the sharp, impatient beat of his patent leather boot on the floor of the dusty shipyard office in which they sat talking by Channing Lockyer's battered old desk, with its litter of blueprints and plans.

"Why?"

The question was shot out as if it had been a projectile.

"Why?" echoed Channing Lockyer. "Because your firm proposes to build submarines of my type for a foreign power—a power that may some day be at war with us. I believe—it may be an inventor's conceited folly—but I believe that with a fleet of Lockyer submarines the power controlling them will be absolute mistress of the seas. Naturally, as a descendant of Jefferson Lockyer, I don't want to see any country but my own with such powerful engines of war at its disposal."

The confidence of inventors in their works was not new to Jasper Ferriss. But somehow the enthusiasm of this tall, pale young man, with

the workman's clothes and the long, nervous fingers, infected him. But it made him burn with an ardent desire to secure possession of the secret of the Lockyer submarine for his own company. However, while Channing Lockyer had been talking the other had managed to control his irritation, and now could speak with his accustomed smoothness.

"I understand and honor your feelings, Mr. Lockyer," he said suavely, "but a man's first duty is really to himself, especially to a man in your position. But when is the government going to test your craft?"

It was an old trick of Jasper Ferriss's to abruptly change the subject when things weren't going his way.

"I am expecting the officer who will be in charge of the experiments, and his picked crew, within a few days," was the reply. "A short time will be spent in making them familiar with the construction, and then, after she is launched, we shall go ahead with the real tests."

"And the launching will be?"

"As soon as possible. But there will be no public ceremony. Only the workmen, who are pledged to secrecy, will know if she is a success or a failure. Naturally we wish to keep it all as quiet as possible."

"The men are still working on her?"

The question seemed hardly necessary. Through the open windows there floated the busy sounds of activity from the fenced-in yard. From a tall, narrow shed built against the seaward side of the high fence came the loudest demonstration of activity.

A rattling volley of riveters' hammers, accompanied by the snorting snarl of the whirring pneumatic drills eating through steel plates, was punctuated by shouted orders and the clamor of metal on metal.

"We are putting on the finishing touches," explained Lockyer. He sighed as he spoke. The "finishing touches" he referred to might mean the last strokes of his own career as well as the end of the preliminary stages of the submarine's construction. Ferriss's eyes followed the tall,

slender young form as the youthful inventor strode up and down the tiny office, with its tumble-down, dust-covered desks, their pigeon-holes crammed full of blueprints and working drawings. No gilt and gingerbread about Channing Lockyer's office. It was business-like as a steam hammer.

"Looks soft as rubber," mused Ferriss, "but he's tough as Harveyized steel; and a blessed sight less workable.

"Well, Mr. Lockyer," he went on, rising, "I must be going. But I am stopping in the village, recollect, so that if you change your mind, or Uncle Sam doesn't appreciate the boat, we stand ready to negotiate for her."

"I won't forget," laughed the inventor, "but really, Mr. Ferriss, you are wasting your time. Either the United States gets her, or, if she isn't good enough for Uncle Sam, I'll sink her to the bottom of Long Island Sound."

"Fine talk! Fine talk!" chuckled the amiable Mr. Ferriss, as he stepped into the noisy, bustling yard, so effectually cut off from outside obser-

vation by its high fence with the spikes on top. "But our figures will look mighty comfortable to you when you are on the brink of ruin. And you will be if the Lockyer doesn't come up to government requirements."

"Time enough to talk about that when the crash comes," laughed the young inventor gaily enough. But as Ferriss's portly, expensively dressed form vanished through the door he sank into a chair, and sat staring at the opposite wall, deep in thought. Things were coming to a crisis at the Lockyer boatyard.

Channing Lockyer was in his twenty-fifth year. Just twelve months before this story opens he had been left a considerable fortune by his father, who during his lifetime had done all he could to discourage his son's "fantastic mechanical dreams," as he called them. With the money in his possession, however, young Lockyer, with the true fire of the inventor, had started out to realize his fondest hope, namely to build a practicable submarine boat capable of making ex-

tended cruises without the drawback of the accompanying "parent boat."

Compressed air had solved the problem of running his engines, but the use of the new driving force had necessitated the invention of an entirely novel type of motor. But young Lockyer—a graduate of the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale, by the way—had perseveringly overcome all difficulties, and now, in the long, narrow shed over in one corner of the enclosed yard, stood the realization of his dreams. Through some friends of his late father's the young man had succeeded in "pulling the wires" at Washington. As a consequence, after many wearisome delays, Lieutenant Archer Parry and a picked crew were to be sent to Grayport to make an extended series of tests with the new craft.

But in "pulling his wires" Lockyer had necessarily to allow a part of his secret to leak out. Now, at Washington "walls have ears," and it was not long after he received the glad news that at last the Navy Department had decided to

look into his type of boat, that Jasper Ferriss, promoter and partner in the Atlas Submarine Company, had come to young Lockyer with a proposal to sell his plant, stock, and experimental boat outright, for a sum that fairly staggered the inventor, who had, as Ferris had hinted, run through almost his entire fortune in making his experiments.

Now, Lockyer was not ignorant that the Atlas people, having failed to sell their own gasoline and electric-driven boats to the government, were making diving torpedo boats for a certain Far Eastern power. He came of old Revolutionary stock, and the idea of selling his boat, the offspring of his brain and inventive power, for possible use against his own country was absolutely repugnant to him; wherefore Lockyer, as we have seen, had informed the Atlas concern in no uncertain terms that he would have nothing to do with their offers, flattering though they might seem. Jasper Ferriss had, however, perseveringly hung on, hoping against hope that something might happen to make the inventor change his

mind. The news he had just received that a naval experimental force had actually been ordered to start for Grayport came as a rude shock to him.

In fact, after leaving Channing Lockyer, Mr. Ferriss took the first train to New York. In the Broadway offices of his firm a stormy scene followed his narrative of his failure to close a deal with Lockyer.

Camberly—Watson Camberly, the other partner of the firm—a middle-aged man of the same aggressive type to which Ferriss himself belonged, took him sharply to task.

“Looks to me as if you’ve bungled this thing badly, Ferriss,” he growled. “You say that if the government decides not to take the boat that there is a chance Lockyer will accept our offer?”

“He’ll have to, or be ruined,” was the prompt rejoinder.

“Then we’ve got him!” cried the other, bringing down a ponderous fist on the shiny mahogany directors’ table of the Atlas Submarine Company.

"I don't think so," rejoined Ferriss quietly; "from what I can gather, the boat is bound to be an unqualified triumph. The government—although of course I didn't tell Lockyer so—will jump at her."

"That is if she is a success?" asked Camberly, a peculiar light creeping into his eyes.

"Exactly. But, as I said, there is no doubt of that."

"Unless——"

"Well, unless what? You don't mean to cripple her, as we did the Grampus Concern when they began to be serious rivals?"

"That's what I do," growled Camberly. "It's this way, Ferriss. We've got to have money. Our Far Eastern friends stand ready to pay us, you know how much, for the compressed-air boat. Thinking that Lockyer would be easy, we practically promised to close a deal with them. We've got to have it."

"In other words, Lockyer's boat has got to fail in her government tests?"

"You catch my meaning exactly," said Cam-

berly, a slow smile spreading over his heavy, coarse features. "I think we had better send for Gradbarr at once."

Ferriss shrugged his shoulders.

"Too bad," he sighed, an almost regretful expression coming over his face. "Lockyer is a decent young fellow, but impracticable—quite too fanatic in his ideas. I really wish we didn't have to resort to such measures, Camberly."

"Rot!" rejoined the other impatiently. "Isn't it for his own good? We'll pay him a bigger price than the government would; but business is business, and if Lockyer won't come into camp willingly, we'll have to drive him."

He tapped a small bell on his desk, and to the obsequious office boy who glided in he gave a sharp order:

"Send to the yard for Tom Gradbarr. Tell him to report to me here as soon as possible."

CHAPTER II.

THE DREADNOUGHT BOYS ON DECK.

“Pardon me, is this Mr. Lockyer?”

It was a warm afternoon, three days after the disgruntled Ferriss had departed, that the inventor looked up from his desk to see, standing in the open doorway of the office, a stalwart young figure that almost filled the opening. Behind the newcomer two other forms could be seen. One was that of a lad about the same age as the youth who had addressed him, and the other a squat, bowlegged old fellow, with a fringe of gray whisker running under his chin from ear to ear, like the crescent of a new moon.

“Yes, I am Mr. Lockyer,” rejoined the submarine boat builder, looking up quickly at his visitors. “Come in, won’t you? What can I do for you?”

As the lad who had first spoken advanced into the dingy office, Lockyer saw that he was a sun-

bronzed young chap of about seventeen, dressed quietly, but neatly, in a gray-mixture suit. His companion, whose round, good-natured face was crowned by a shock of red hair, was about the same age and also wore a suit of plain but well-fitting clothes. The third member of the party, however, as before hinted, was a startling contrast. His stout figure was garbed in a checked suit, capable, at a pinch, of acting as a checker board; a singularly small derby hat hung to one side of his head, seemingly only being secured from slipping off by an outstanding ear; and round his neck was tied a silk handkerchief of gorgeous hue. Jacob's coat would have looked pale and colorless in comparison with it.

The countenance of this gaudily apparelled person offered a singular contrast to his violent clothes. It was round, weather-beaten and good-natured, the face of a hale and hearty old fellow who has lived an outdoor life. Two blue eyes, set deep in a mass of furrows and crow's-feet, twinkled brightly as he looked about him.

"My name is Ned Strong, boatswain's mate of

the *Manhattan*," introduced Ned, who had been the first to enter the office. "This is my ship-mate, Boatswain's Mate Hercules Taylor, and this"—turning to the spectacularly garbed old man, "is Tom Marlin."

"Aye, aye!" rumbled old Tom, from sheer force of habit.

"Why, you are some of the men who are detailed to the trial crew that is to try out my boat, are you not?" inquired the inventor, extending his hand cordially as he rose from his desk.

"Yes, sir," nodded Ned. "We arrived a few minutes ago, and after engaging rooms at the hotel in the village we came down here. We thought that Lieutenant Parry might have arrived."

"Why, no. I've just had a wire from him saying that he cannot get here till some time this evening. It seems to me," went on Mr. Lockyer, surveying his guests with interest, "that you two lads must be the ones the newspapers call the 'Dreadnought Boys.'"

"I guess we've occupied a good deal of valu-

able space to the exclusion of real news," laughed Ned, coloring a little.

"Not to mention pictures," grinned Herc. "They took one of me riding the ship's goat. My freckles came out fine—like spots on the sun."

"You'll pardon my saying that you look very young to have distinguished yourselves so noticeably," said the inventor.

"That's what I say, sir," struck in old Tom, in his deep, hoarse voice. "Why, I've bin in the navy fer forty years, in wood and steel, and nothin' never happened to me the way it's happened to them lads."

"I guess it was just our luck," laughed Ned good-naturedly; "you seem to have a splendid plant here, Mr. Lockyer," he went on, by way of changing the subject. Ned was not one of those lads who likes to "blow his own trumpet." Such swaggerers are usually found wanting when the time comes to try their metal.

"Yes; we've gone into the thing pretty extensively," rejoined the inventor. "And now, perhaps, as your officers have not arrived, you

would like to look over the plant. Have you ever seen a submarine before?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Ned; "though I understand that your craft is far ahead of the ones we are at present using. On our return from Costaveza we were attached for a while to a 'parent boat,' and cruised around with the diving craft."

"My type of submarine will do away with the parent boat," declared Mr. Lockyer enthusiastically. "She has a cruising range of two thousand miles or more, if necessary. But there, you will think all that mere inventor's enthusiasm. Within a week, however, I hope you will be able to see for yourselves what she is capable of."

"Jer-uso-hosophat! If you'd told me ten years ago that we would be snoopin' around the bottom of the ocean in such craft, I'd not have believed it," declared old Tom, as they set out. "I'd have believed you could go to the bottom, all right; but I'd have likewise held that you'd stay there. But sence we've bin detailed to submarine

dooty, I kin feel fins growing out o' my shoulder blades, I relish being under so much."

"Something fishy about that!" chuckled Herc.

While the boys are on their way across the busy yard let us introduce them more fully to the reader who has not already encountered them. Ned Strong and Herc Taylor, then, were two lads who, orphaned at an early age, had made their home for some years with a harsh, unsympathetic grandparent who owned a big farm at Lamb's Corners, not far from Albany, New York. They had tired of the unceasing, monotonous round of farm duties, but could not very well see a way out of their hum-drum existence till one evening, in their local store, they saw one of the navy's recruiting posters. They wrote for information to the Bureau of Navigation, and soon got replies that decided them as to their future careers. After a stormy scene with their crabbed relative, they set out for New York, their sole capital being some pocket money made by the sale of skins.

Assigned to the new Dreadnought battleship

Manhattan, when they had passed their examination in New York, they at once plunged into some remarkable adventures. The *Manhattan* was ordered to Guantanamo for battle practice soon after the boys joined her. Of their experiences and many exciting adventures the readers can learn in the first volume of this series, "The Dreadnought Boys on Battle Practice." Their signal services rendered when a flare-back occurred in a big-gun turret won them their promotions and medals from the government. This was only one of their many exciting and perilous adventures.

After a brief furlough they once more went to sea, this time aboard the destroyer *Beale*, which had been ordered to duty at Costaveza, a turbulent South American republic where a revolution was raging. While there they were able to distinguish themselves mightily by participating in some stirring naval engagements. These came about during their surprising cruise on a Costavezan destroyer. The final downfall of their old enemy, Hank Harkins, a ne'er-do-well

from their native village, was also related in this volume, which is called, "The Dreadnought Boys Aboard a Destroyer."

Although they had rendered American interests in Costaveza great service, the United States could not reward them, as the lads had been non-combatants, so far as theory was concerned. By way of recompensing them, however, they had been assigned to submarine work, the most interesting branch of the service to-day. On this duty they had once more encountered old Tom Marlin, who, the reader will recall, was their guide, philosopher and friend during their troublous early days on the *Manhattan*. Their commander, Captain Dunham, bearing the lads in mind, had later detailed them, with Lieutenant Parry, to the Lockyer secret tests. And garbed as we have seen, in ordinary clothes, the lads and old Tom had journeyed down to Grayport, expecting to meet there their superior officer.

As they left the tool-repair shop, Mr. Lockyer turned to Ned and remarked:

“And now we will see what some folks have called ‘Lockyer’s Dream.’ ”

He pointed to the long, narrow shed we have already noticed. ‘The boys’ eyes sparkled with interested anticipation as they struck out with him across the yard. Old Tom, however, lingered. He had drawn out his inevitable black pipe and tried to light it. But in the brisk wind that was blowing he was compelled to seek the shelter of a small shack that stood, with open door, not far from the tool shed.

“Where’s your friend?” asked Mr. Lockyer, suddenly noting Tom’s absence from the party.

“Why, he—— Oh, there he is!” cried Ned, who had just noted the ends of the old tar’s neck-tie floating out on the breezes as the mariner dodged into the shed.

“What’s he after in there?” asked the inventor in a sharp tone, staring back toward the shed into which Tom had dived.

“He’s lighting his pipe,” exclaimed Ned, craning his neck. “He——”

“WHAT!” roared the inventor in a shrill

voice. His eyes seemed to distend and a look of alarm came over his face.

Before the Dreadnought Boys knew what was the matter he was off like a bullet from a rifle, crossing the yard in long jumps. In a few bounds he gained the shed, and, rushing into it, made straight for old Tom.

“Look! Look out there!” he exclaimed, pointing through the door in the boys’ direction.

Old Tom, somewhat astonished at the other’s vehemence, obediently glanced in the direction indicated. As he did so, Lockyer’s long fingers closed over the mariner’s and he seized the match from them and vigorously stamped it out. Then, with a quick movement, he caught the astonished tar by the scruff of the neck and the slack of his trousers, and, with a strength that the boys had never guessed he possessed, propelled that astounded mariner through the door and halfway across the yard. Arrived at a panting standstill, Mr. Lockyer seized Tom’s pipe from his mouth, and without a word of explanation chucked it

clear over the high board fence and out of the place.

"Well! What the——" began old Tom; but the habit of discipline was strong upon him, and, muffling his resentment, he turned upon Mr. Lockyer. "Well, sir," he began, "I don't take that very kindly. You might hev warned me and——"

"Warned you!" shouted the inventor. "Great heaven, man, it might have been too late. Do you know what is stored inside that place where you lit the match?"

Tom shook his head, while the boys leaned eagerly forward.

"Gun-cotton!" was the startling rejoinder.

"Gun-cotton!" echoed Ned. "Then Tom might have——"

"Blown us all to kingdom come, and the boat, too," declared the inventor, who had now recovered his composure, though his face was still pale. It was old Tom and the boys who were shaky now.

"Good gracious!" quavered Ned, not able to

repress a shudder as he realized their narrow escape. "But why don't you put up some sign,—” he asked, "something to warn any stranger of the dangerous contents of the shed?"

For answer Lockyer swung the open door closed, and they now saw clearly enough that, emblazoned in big white letters on its outside, was the inscription:

"Gun-cotton! Danger! Persons entering this shed will wear felt-soled shoes."

"I'm going to find out who left that door open," said the inventor grimly; "but in any event, smoking is forbidden on these premises. It's too dangerous."

"A good order, too," assented Ned. But old Tom's face bore a lugubrious look.

"It's all right for you who don't smoke and can't be persuaded to, shipmates," he muttered so that the inventor would not hear, "but me and my old pipe's bin messmates fer a long time, an' I hate to lose it."

"Cheer up. You can easily find it outside,"

comforted Herc; "but you'll have to confine your smoking to the evenings after this."

"Reckon that's so," assented Tom, immensely cheered at the thought that his pipe was not irrevocably lost.

"And now we'll continue our stroll," said Mr. Lockyer. "First let us visit the construction shed, which I imagine will prove the most interesting."

So saying, he struck out rapidly across the yard, his long legs opening and closing like the blades of a pair of scissors. They could not have been a hundred yards from the shed when the ground shook and there came the sound of a muffled explosion. As the inventor came to a sudden halt, a startled look on his face, a chorus of excited shouts arose from within, and presently a white-faced boy came rushing out. He was followed by another workman and then another. Panic seemed to have seized them. They hardly noticed our astonished group as they sped by.

"Good heavens! something has happened to

the boat!" gasped Mr. Lockyer, turning pale and his slender form shaking like a leaf. He clapped a hand to his head. In the face of the sudden emergency he seemed crushed.

CHAPTER III.

THE WORK OF A DASTARD.

But the inventor's inaction did not last for long. Like the workmen, he also started to run, but instead of his flight being away from the shed, it was toward it. The three man-o'-wars-men followed close at his heels.

As they neared the door a hulking big fellow lurched out, and Mr. Lockyer seized him eagerly.

"What is it, Gradbarr?" he demanded tremblingly. "What has happened?"

"'Splosion of some sort, sir," was the hasty rejoinder. "Don't go in there," he exclaimed, as the inventor hastily darted forward once more. "It's sure death."

But what inventor would not dare death itself if there was the barest chance of saving his brain-child from harm? Shaking off the other's detaining grip impatiently, Lockyer entered the shed, followed closely by Ned and his compan-

ions. Curiously enough, however, Gradbarr seemed inclined to follow, now that he had seen the inventor enter. His first panic appeared to have been dissipated. As old Tom's form vanished within, he turned and followed.

"Got to see they don't find out too much," he muttered to himself.

Within the shed was intense gloom, lighted only here and there by scattered incandescent lights. The work being done was now all within the hull of the submarine itself, and consequently there was no necessity for bright illumination without. Cutting down light bills was one of a score of ways in which Lockyer was trying to eke out his dwindling fortune.

At first nothing very much seemed to be the matter. The gray and red painted outlines of the submarine bulked up through the gloom like the form of some fantastic and puffy fish. She was shaped like a short, very fat cigar, with a hump on the top where the conning tower, with its big round glass lenses—like goggle eyes—projected. A ladder was at her side, and up

this Lockyer nimbly skipped, the boys after him.

As they gained the sloping deck, round which a low iron rail ran, a peculiar odor was noticeable. It was a sickening, pungent sort of smell, and the boys caught themselves swallowing chokingly as they inhaled it.

"Jeruso-hos-ophat, there's bin some adult eggs busted around here!" gasped old Tom, holding to a hand rail on the conning tower.

"Smells like it," agreed Ned. "What is it, sir?" he inquired of Lockyer, who was hesitating in front of the manhole which led down inside the boat.

"It's a peculiar kind of gas which I use in starting the engines," explained the inventor. "How it has been liberated I cannot imagine, but it is very volatile and must have caused the explosion we heard."

"Do you think the boat is damaged?" inquired Herc.

"Impossible to say," rejoined Lockyer nervously; "the hull seems all right outside. Wait till I

open these ventilators and liberate the fumes, and we'll go inside and find out."

Familiar as the boys were with submarine construction, it was an easy task for them to aid the inventor in unclamping the deck ventilators. The gas rushed out in their faces, but they stepped aside and it did not harm them. All this was watched from the shadows of a corner of the shed by Gradbarr.

"Looks like I've failed, after all," he muttered, as presently, the gas having cleared off, the inventor decided it was safe to descend and they entered the conning tower.

Stealthily as a cat, the machinist crept from his hiding place, and, ascending the ladder, followed them.

Within the conning tower the lads found themselves upon a steel ladder with chain hand-rails, much like what they had been accustomed to on a man-of-war. Descending this with quick, nervous steps, Lockyer darted for a door opening in the bulkhead at one end of the chamber, at the foot of the ladder, which was about ten by

twenty feet. From this door slow, lazy curls of smoke were coming. Thanks to the opened ventilators, however, the interior of the submarine was comparatively free of gases, and the inventor unhesitatingly passed through the door. As he did so his foot caught against a soft, yielding object. The next instant a quick glance downward showed him that he had tripped on the recumbent form of a boy. In his hand the lad clutched a wrench. Stooping swiftly, Lockyer picked him up and bore him out into the other chamber, where, assisted by the boys, he stretched him upon a bench. Although the lad's cheeks were ghastly pale, his chest was heaving, and presently he opened his eyes.

"Thank goodness you are all right, then, Sim!" breathed Mr. Lockyer. The lad, a slight young chap of about sixteen, with a mop of curly hair and large, round blue eyes, looked up at him.

"Did I do it, Mr. Lockyer? Did I do it?"

"Do what?" asked the inventor, in the indulgent tone he might have used to one whose mind was wandering.

"Why, turn off the gas valve. I tried to; but I don't know if I made good before everything began to get wavy and it all went dark."

"I don't understand you," said the inventor; "I thought the gas came from a leak. Do you mean that some one was tampering with the valve?"

"I saw Gradbarr, the new man, slip into the torpedo room, sir, while no one was looking. He had that wrench with him. I was following him to tell him that no one was allowed in there without your orders, when he came running out. I ran in to see if he had done any mischief, but the explosion came just as I got to the valve. I think I turned it off, though."

"You did, Sim!" exclaimed Lockyer, glancing into the steel-walled space beyond the chamber in which they were assembled. "I can see the valve is at 'off.' My boy, I don't know how to thank you. If it hadn't been for your presence of mind more gas would have escaped and the boat been blown up."

Then, turning to the others, who looked rather puzzled, the inventor rapidly explained.

"The gas is kept in a pressure-tank forward. I filled the tank recently to test out the engines, but a pipe did not fit, and it was disconnected. When the pipes were unjointed an open end was, of course, left in that chamber. It was thus a simple matter, by turning on the valve, to flood the chamber with gas."

"But how did it ignite?" asked Ned.

"Evidently, that plumber's torch overturned near the door, touched it off," was the rejoinder. "Great Heavens, if Sim had not done the brave thing he did, the boat would have been ripped open as if she were made of tin. Only the fact that the full quantity of gas was not released saved the boat."

Herc had picked up the wrench Sim had clasped in his unconscious hand, and was examining it curiously.

"See, sir," he said, extending it, "it's marked T. G."

"Tom Gradbarr!" exclaimed Mr. Lockyer; "those are his initials."

"Who is this Gradbarr?" asked Tom; "what kind of er craft is he?"

"Why, he is a singularly capable man, who applied for work here a few days ago. He came highly recommended, so I put him to work helping the gang that is cleaning up the hull, for you see, practically all the work is completed."

"Would he have had any object in injuring the boat?" asked Ned, for Sim's story had naturally aroused all their suspicions.

"None that I know of," was the rejoinder; "but, still, in work of this kind it is hard to tell who may seek to damage you."

"But surely he would have attacked the engines first if he had wished to disable the craft," commented Ned, after a moment's thought.

"Ah! but he could not do that," said the inventor quickly; "the engine room is kept locked always. No one but myself has the key. It is there that most of our secrets are."

"But the bulkhead door must have been locked, too," persisted the boy.

"By Jove, so it was, and only Anderson, the foreman, had the key. I'll send for him, and find out about this. Of course, to get into the gas compartment, the man must have had the key."

"Evidently," said Ned dryly, "and if I may offer a word of advice, sir, you will examine this chap Gradbarr before he gets a chance to leave the yard—hullo! what's that?"

A rivet had fallen from the ladder above and dropped clattering to the iron-grated floor behind him. It had been dislodged by Gradbarr's foot, but the fellow, who had been listening to every word uttered below, was too quick to be discovered by Ned's upward glance. With the agile movement of a snake, he slipped from the deck and down the ladder before his presence was even suspected.

"Now we will take a look about us," said Mr. Lockyer; "feel like moving, Sim?"

"Oh, I'm all right now, sir," said the youngster

rising, though rather weakly, to his feet; "say, but that gas does knock a fellow out when it gets going."

"Yes, but on board the boat, when she is in commission, there will be no danger from it," declared the inventor; "automatic valves to regulate it safely have been provided for."

As he spoke he fitted a key to a door in an after bulkhead, similar in all respects to the forward partition, and led the way into a long, low room with steel-riveted walls, filled with peculiar-looking machinery. The boys could make out the forms of cylinders and crankshafts, but every other device about the place was strange to them.

The engine-room was unlike any other they had ever entered. It was spotless, and every bit of metal fairly gleamed and shone. Queer-looking levers and handles were everywhere, and at the farther end of it were several gauges affixed to another steel bulkhead.

"Behind those gauges are the air-tanks to drive the engines," explained the inventor. "Here are the pumps for compressing it. We can carry a

pressure in our tanks of six hundred pounds to the square inch, which is sufficient to drive the boat at thirty miles an hour on the surface, and from eight to fifteen under the water. We have triple propellers, each driven independently. If one breaks down it makes little difference."

"Wow!" exclaimed Herc. Ned looked astonished. Old Tom only gasped.

"If you can do all that, sir," he said, "your craft's the marvel of the age."

"That's just what I think she is," said Lockyer with a laugh.

"And these pumps here?" asked Ned, indicating an intricate mass of machinery painted red and green, and brass-mounted.

"Those are the pumps for regulating the rising and lowering apparatus. As you, of course, know, below us and in the extreme bow and stern are tanks which, when we wish to sink, are filled with sea-water. If we want to rise and float on the surface, we set our compressed air at work and drive out the water. The empty tanks, of

course, supply sufficient buoyancy to float the boat."

"And you have no storage batteries or gasoline engine or electric motors," gasped Ned.

"No. I think that in the Lockyer boat we have successfully abolished the storage battery, with its dangerous, metal-corroding fumes, and the bother of having two sets of engines, the gasoline for the surface and the electric for under-water work. We have a dynamo, however, to furnish current for lighting and other purposes."

"How do you get your air-supply when you are running under water?" asked Ned, his face beaming with interest.

"When the submarine is afloat you will see that alongside her periscope she will carry another pipe. This is of sufficient length to allow us to run twenty feet under water and still suck in air. Like the periscope pipe, this air-tube will telescope up, folding down inside the submarine. When we are too far below to use this device, we run on air already compressed in reserve

tanks. We can carry enough for five hours of running without renewing it. In case the pressure is not high enough, we expand it,—heating it by electric radiators.”

“And your fresh air?”

“Still compressed air,” laughed the inventor. “We drive out the old foul atmosphere through specially devised valves, the fresh air taking the place of it.”

“Then the only time you have to utilize the gas is in starting your engine?” asked Ned.

“That’s the only time,” smiled the inventor. “It enters the cylinders just as gasoline does in a gasoline motor, and is ignited or exploded by an electric spark. This gives the impetus to the engines, and then the gas is cut off and the compressed air turned on.”

The boys looked dazed. The Lockyer seemed to be in truth a wonderful vessel. But as yet she had not entered the water. Even making due allowances for an inventor’s enthusiasm, it began to appear to the boys, however, as if they were

on board a craft that would make history in time to come.

“Now forward,” said Mr. Lockyer, leading the way through the cabin to the room in which the explosion of the released gas had occurred, “we have the torpedo room. Two tubes for launching two Whitehead torpedoes are provided. Compressed air is used here, too, you see. But a charge of gas is exploded in the tube to fire the torpedoes.”

He indicated a maze of complicated pipes and valves leading to the rear of the torpedo tubes. Steel racks lined the sides of the place, which was in the extreme bow of the craft and, therefore, shaped like a cone. These supports were for the torpedoes. Resting places for ten—five on each side—had been provided.

Many other features there were about the craft which it would only become wearisome to catalogue here. They will be introduced as occasion arises and fully explained. As they emerged from the torpedo room, a heavy-set man in workman's clothes, with a foot rule in one hand and

a wrench in the other, came forward, advancing through the door in the bulkhead. As it so happened, Ned was in front and the newcomer rudely shoved him aside on his way through the door.

"Get out o' my way," he growled. "Don't you see I'm in a hurry? Where's Mr. Lockyer?"

"Here I am, Anderson," rejoined the inventor, stepping forward. He had just completed a careful examination of the room in which the explosion of gas had occurred. This investigation confirmed his first decision that little damage had been done to the craft, thanks to young Sim's plucky work.

But as Mr. Lockyer's gaze lit on Anderson an angry expression came into his eyes, replacing his look of satisfaction at the discovery that no damage had been done.

"Ah, I want to speak to you, Anderson," he said, with a sarcastic intonation in his voice; "but when last I saw you, you were in too much of a hurry to stop. You and your men were all run-

ning for dear life, leaving this lad here unconscious in the gas-filled torpedo room."

"I wasn't running away," muttered Anderson. "I was looking for you, and I——"

"Well, never mind about that now, Anderson," intercepted Mr. Lockyer crisply. "I daresay it was as you say. Fortunately, no damage was done. But that is not thanks to you. I am disappointed in you, Anderson. I made you foreman here, hoping that you would prove as capable as my estimation of you. Instead I find that you gave a newcomer the key to the torpedo room when you know it was against my strict orders for any one to enter it till the break in the pipe had been adjusted."

"I gave that man the key so as he could take a look at the pipe," explained Anderson. "He said he thought he knew how repairs could be made on it."

"It makes no difference, it was against my orders," snapped Mr. Lockyer. "You could have asked me first had you wished to do such a thing.

Then, too, the door of the gun-cotton shed was left open. How did that happen?"

"I dunno," grumbled Anderson. "I suppose you'll blame that on me, too."

"If you are yard foreman, you certainly were responsible for it," was the rejoinder.

Some of the other panic-stricken workmen had returned now and stood clustered on the steel ladder and about the foot of it, listening curiously. Apparently their presence made Anderson anxious to assert his independence for he burst out in an insolent voice:

"I guess I know more about my business than any crack-brained inventor. I'm not going to be talked to that way, either, Mr. Lockyer. Understand?"

"I understand that you can walk to the office and get your pay, Anderson," was the prompt retort. "The sooner you do so, the better it will suit me. You have been getting more and more impudent and shiftless every day. This insolence is the last straw. You are discharged."

Anderson grew pale for a minute under the

black grime on his face. But he quickly recovered himself, and his eyes blazed with fury. He took a step forward and shook his fist under Lockyer's nose.

"Fire me if you want to," he grated out; "but it will be the sorriest day's work you ever did. I know a whole lot about your old submarine tea-kettle that you wouldn't want told outside. I've held my tongue hitherto, but I shan't now. You'll see."

"That will do, Anderson," said Mr. Lockyer, turning away. "This has gone far enough. Men, you can knock off for the rest of the day. By to-morrow I will have a new foreman for you. Come, gentlemen, we have about exhausted the possibilities of the submarine for this afternoon."

CHAPTER IV.

ANDERSON DINES ON MUD.

As the others turned to follow, Sim held back, but Mr. Lockyer turned to him and beckoned for him to make one of the party. Leaving Anderson in the midst of the gang of workmen, they made their way to the office, where Mr. Lockyer, unlocking a safe, drew forth a roll of bills. Selecting one, he presented it to Sim, who gave a cry of surprise as his eyes fell on its denomination.

“A hundred dollars! Oh, Mr. Lockyer, I couldn’t think of it! Why, sir——”

“Now, see here,” laughed the inventor, “I’m getting off cheap. If you hadn’t shut off that gas, I might have lost many times the amount of that bill.”

The lad was not proof against this line of reasoning, and finally placed the bill in his pocket. Soon afterward Anderson presented himself at

the wicket, and was paid off by Mr. Lockyer's solitary clerk and bookkeeper. His sullen face was unusually ferocious as he glared in at the inventor and his young friends.

"I ain't through with you yet, Lockyer," he roared, apparently in an insane access of fury. "I'll fix you. You'll see. I hope you and your submarine go to rust and ruin on the floor of the Sound. I hope——"

"That will do, Anderson," said the inventor quietly. "I wish to hear no more from you."

"But you will. Don't you fool yourself on that," exclaimed the furious man, flinging out of the office with muttered imprecations on his lips.

"That feller needs a short cruise in ther brig," commented old Tom, as Anderson dashed out of the place.

"I'm sorry to have had to get rid of him, for he was a competent workman," said Mr. Lockyer. "But he has been becoming altogether too aggressive of late. By the way, I wonder where that chap Gradbarr is. I want to interview him, too,

and find out how he happened to turn on that gas. It's a horrible suspicion to have; but it looks to me almost like a deliberate attempt to wreck the craft."

"That's the way it looks to me, too, sir," agreed Ned.

"By the way," said Mr. Lockyer suddenly, "do you boys know anything about thread-cutting? I'd like to get that pipe connection fitted up to-night."

"I guess we can help you," said Ned, and, accordingly, they retraced their steps to the submarine shed. The workmen had all left by this time, but they found the tools they needed, and soon had the measurements of the connection, and the required pitch of the screw to be cut on the new pipe. This done, they started for the machine shop to finish up the work. Sim, however, who was still white and shaky after his experience, was ordered home by Mr. Lockyer.

"You've done enough for one day, Sim," he said. "Be off home now, and report bright and early to-morrow."

As Sim made off, the inventor looked after him.

"There's a lad that has the makings of a fine man in him," he said. "He applied here for work some weeks ago, and, being short of a helper, I gave him a job. He knew something about metal working, as his father was formerly blacksmith here. The man died some time ago, and since then I guess Sim and his mother have had a hard time to get along. That hundred dollars will look very large to them."

"He certainly did a plucky thing," agreed Ned. "It takes courage of the right sort to put through what he did."

"Bother it all," exclaimed the inventor, after a few minutes' work on the pipe. "I've just recalled that we have no red lead to make the joint tight with. We used up our last yesterday. I wonder if one of you would mind going up to the village for some."

"Not a bit," said Ned. "I'm pining for exercise. Herc, here, and myself will be up there and back in no time."

Thanking them, Mr. Lockyer gave them directions where to go, and some money. The Dreadnought Boys were soon off on their errand. The shop found, it did not take long to make their purchases and, with the parcel under Ned's arm, they started back.

"There's a short cut to the water, through that field there," said Ned, as they came to a turning. "Let's take it and save time."

Accordingly, they presently emerged in a low-lying meadow, thickly grown with clumps of alders and other swamp shrubs. A path threaded among them, however, which apparently led almost direct to the boat yard.

"We'd have saved time if we'd known about this before," observed Ned, and was about to add something more when he stopped short. From what was apparently only a short distance ahead, there had come a cry of pain.

"Oh, don't, please don't, Mr. Anderson."

"You young blackguard, I'll break your arm for you if you don't tell me everything," growled out a voice they recognized as that of the re-

cently discharged foreman. "It was you that told on me, wasn't it?"

Another cry of pain followed.

"It's Anderson. He's ill-treating that young Sim!" cried Ned, his face flushing angrily. The Dreadnought Boy hated to hear of anything weak and small being badly used.

"Come on, Herc, we'll take a hand in this," he said.

They advanced rapidly, yet almost noiselessly, and in a second a turn of the path brought them upon the two whose voices they had heard. Anderson had hold of Sim's arm and was twisting it tightly while he pounded on the back of it with one burly fist to make the agony more excruciating.

"Here you, let go of that boy!" exclaimed Ned. Anderson looked up furiously.

"Oh, it's you interfering again, is it? Now you take my advice and keep out of this. I don't know who you are and I don't want to, but just keep on your way, or you'll get hurt."

"Oh, I don't know," rejoined Ned easily. "If

you don't stop ill-treating that boy, it's *you* that will get hurt."

"Is that so?" snarled Anderson. "Well, Mister Busy-body, I'll just do as I please."

"So saying, he gave Sim's arm, which he had not released, an additional twist, causing the frail lad to cry out again. But before the cry had completely left the boy's lips, Ned's hand had closed upon Anderson's wrist, and that worthy, with a snort of pain, suddenly found himself staggering backward under the force of the quick twist the boy had given him.

"I'll show you!" he cried, recovering himself and bellowing with rage. "Mind yourself!"

But it was Anderson who should have minded. As he spoke, he made a mad rush at Ned, who, not wishing to hurt the man, simply sidestepped as the other came on. But he left one foot extended, and as Anderson came in contact with it he tripped.

Floundering wildly, he sought to retain his balance. But the effort was in vain.

Splash!

Over he went, spread-eagle fashion, face down into a pool of stagnant swamp water.

"Haw! Haw! Haw!" laughed Herc. "Say, mister, you're so fond of water that you just have to wallow in it like a hog, don't you?"

Anderson scrambled to his feet a sorry sight. Mud daubed his face and the front of his clothing. Mud was in his hair, his eyes, his nose, and his mouth.

"I'll fix you," he cried, making another dash at Ned, but this time the Dreadnought Boy simply caught the enraged fellow's wrists and held them to his sides as easily as if he had been restraining a fractious child.

"Now, see here, Anderson," he shot out, "you've had trouble enough for one day. Don't look for more. Now get!"

Cowed by Ned's determined manner, but more especially by the easy fashion in which the boy had quelled him, holding him helpless as an infant, Anderson "got." But as he strode off through the bushes there was a dark look on his face, a look that boded no good to the Dread-

nought Boys, who, however, hardly gave the matter a further thought. Seeing Sim safe on his way home, they turned once more to their path and arrived at the boat yard in due time.

"Took you fellows longer than you expected, didn't it?" asked Mr. Lockyer, as they appeared.

"We attended to a little business on the way," replied Ned quietly; "and now if you are ready, Mr. Lockyer, we'll fit that pipe."

In the meantime, Anderson, instead of going home, had hied himself to the village hotel, which boasted of a drinking bar. In this place he sought solace for his woes as many another foolish or weak man has done before him. In the midst of his angry musings, a man stepped in who, apparently, recognized Anderson, for he stopped short and gave a low whistle.

"Anderson! Wonder what he is doing here at this time of day."

Stepping forward, he came up behind the disgruntled foreman with an appearance of great cordiality.

"Why, hello, old man," he exclaimed.

"Work through at the yard? What are you doing here at this hour?"

"Gradbarr!" exclaimed Anderson, surprised in his turn, as he faced the other. "Why, ain't you down at the yard?"

"Oh, after that blow-up I decided to quit. Too risky a job for a family man like me."

"Where is your family?" inquired Anderson. "Never knew you had one."

"Oh, in California," was the reply.

"Hum, you keep far enough away from them," commented Anderson; "and, by the way, I've got a bone to pick with you. You got me discharged over your borrowing of that key."

"What!" exclaimed Gradbarr, with genuine surprise. "Fired? How's that? Although, now I come to notice it, you do look a bit mussed up. Bin in a fight?"

"Why no," was the sullen rejoinder. "What made you think that?"

"Well," grinned Gradbarr, "men don't generally roll in the mud if they can help it, and by the looks of you that's what you've bin a-doin'.

But tell me about how you come to be fired. If it's my fault, I'll make it right with you."

Anderson soon related his own version of how he came to be discharged. He was in an angry, reckless mood, and did not care how loud he talked, so that he had for a listener Jeb Sproggs, the landlord of the hotel. Jeb listened with open mouth and ears to Anderson's description of the "young whelps," as he termed them, who had accompanied Mr. Lockyer, meaning, of course, Ned and Herc. "And there was an old geezer, too," he went on; "looked like some sort of a retired fisherman."

"Why them fellows is registered here," put in the landlord, as Anderson concluded. "Yep," he continued, "their names is Strong, Taylor, and the old feller's called Marlin."

"Then they weren't mere butt-in visitors to the yard as I had them figgered out to be," cried Anderson.

"Why no," said Sproggs, discarding a badly mangled toothpick. "As I understand it, them

lads is here on special duty connected with that diving boat. They're in the Navy."

"The Navy!" exclaimed Gradbarr. "Then I may be too late."

"What's that?" asked Anderson eagerly. "Do you know them?"

"No," rejoined Gradbarr, "I don't know them and I don't much care to, from what you've told me about them. But I've got to be going on. Say," he continued, in a whisper, bending over till his mouth was quite close to Anderson's ear, "do you want to be put in the way of revenging yourself on Lockyer and that whole bunch?"

"Do I?" Anderson's eyes lit up with a vicious flare. He involuntarily clenched his fists.

"Well, walk up the street with me a way and I'll tell you how to get even."

For a moment Anderson wavered. After all, this man was a stranger to him. It might be a trap to draw him out and discover if he cherished any harm to the submarine. But then his evil, vindictive nature asserted itself. He ached and palpitated with his every sense to avenge

himself on the man who had humiliated him before the whole crew of workmen, and particularly was he desirous of making Ned Strong and his companion smart for the indignities they had thrust upon him.

"All right," he said. "I'm with you."

"A tool ready to my hand," was the thought that flashed across Gradbarr's mind as, arm in arm, the two worthies strolled from the hotel and slowly walked up the village street.

That evening, as the Dreadnought Boys and their weather-beaten comrade were returning to the hotel, they encountered Zeb Anderson. They would have avoided him if they could, but as he planted himself in their path there was no way of escaping a meeting. But that they were not anxious to court such an encounter, our party was showing by hurrying on, when Anderson caught Ned by the arm.

"I s'pose you think you and me had a brush and you win," he said in a voice harsh with hate. "Well, just you wait. Our score ain't evened up yet. You're going ter sea on that old submarine

I hear. Well," he said, raising his voice, "I know more about her than you do. You'll all go to the bottom every last man of you and leave your bones rotting there. That's what I hope and that's what will be."

With this amiable prophecy, Anderson strode off down the street, casting back ever and anon a glance of hatred at the naval party.

"Wall," exclaimed Tom Marlin, who had been made acquainted by the boys with what had occurred in the alder swamp, "if words could drown we'd be dead by this time, all right."

"Somehow, though, I think that that man Anderson is a good fellow to watch out for," replied Ned. "He has the look in his eye of a man who might become insane from brooding upon his fancied wrongs."

"Hullo, there is the Lieutenant and Midshipman Stark, and there's good old Stanley, too," cried Herc suddenly, pointing to a group in front of the hotel. Hastening their steps, our party was soon respectfully saluting Lieutenant Parry and his aide.

The next morning work was resumed at the yard, with Andy Bowler, a capable workman, in Anderson's place as superintendent. Sim was made his assistant, and work was rapidly rushed ahead. Sim proved himself, in spite of his tender years, to be a genius with machinery, and he and the Dreadnought Boys became firm friends. All this time the naval party was acquainting itself thoroughly with the principles of the Lockyer engine so that when the time came they could take sole charge of the craft and test her in every way.

All this time nothing further had been heard of Gradbarr, who, as we have seen, had failed in his first attempt to damage the submarine. He did not even appear to collect his money. Mr. Lockyer, with an idea of having him arrested, notified the police, but they could find no trace of him. Anderson was seen about the village and appeared to have plenty of money, although the source of his income was more or less of a mystery. But things were so busy at the yard that the boys or any one connected with the plant had little time to waste on speculations concern-

ing the rascally pair. Work in the craft was rushed day and night. Rapidly it narrowed down to mere details.

One bright afternoon Mr. Lockyer seized up a megaphone and by its agency announced throughout the yard that the work was practically finished. What a cheer went up as the men gathered about him! Another shout arose when it was given out that each man that evening would find a ten-dollar bill awaiting him at the office.

"When is the launching set for, sir?" inquired Ned of Mr. Lockyer that evening.

"There will be no formal launching, with invited guests, a brass band, and all that; but we'll run her off the ways to-morrow, if it's a good day," was the reply. "I can hardly believe that the crucial test is so near. I wonder, will she make good?"

"You'll win out, sir, never fear," Ned assured the inventor, who was beginning to show the effect of his long strain.

Herc echoed his comrade's assurances, and

they came from hearts that meant every word of them, too. Both lads had come to have a strong liking and respect for the young inventor. The feeling was mutual. Channing Lockyer had grown to feel that he had near him at least three staunch, loyal hearts, upon whom he could depend in an emergency.

How soon that emergency was to come not one of them guessed.

CHAPTER V.

LIKE THIEVES IN THE NIGHT.

“Good gracious!” exclaimed Mr. Lockyer that evening, “I’ve forgotten to provide a flag for the launching.”

The inventor had dined with the officers at the hotel, his own home being made with his sister some little distance outside the village. Now they were seated on the porch.

“That is a serious omission truly,” agreed Lieutenant Parry, “but surely you can get one in the village here.”

The telephone was put into requisition, but it was found, to their disappointment, that it would be impossible to obtain any kind of a flag nearer than Picksville, a town which boasted some quite large stores.

“I’d drive over there to-night rather than not have a flag on the Lockyer to-morrow,” said the inventor, “but it is absolutely necessary that I

make those final computations on the gas pressure areas."

"Why not let some of our boys go," suggested the naval officer. "Strong and Taylor would be delighted at the idea of such an excursion. They can get a rig here at the livery attached to the hotel."

"The very thing," exclaimed the inventor, and hastened off to find the lads. He discovered them with Boatswain's Mate Stanley and old Tom. The four were busily discussing old times in Costaveza when Mr. Lockyer came upon them. Stanley, it will be recalled, had played a prominent part in the adventures of the "Dreadnought Boys Aboard a Destroyer." Mr. Lockyer soon explained his errand, and, of course, our lads jumped at the chance of a long drive on a fine, moonlight night.

Lieutenant Parry, having put the official sanction upon the trip, the lads set out shortly afterward.

"Say, Ned," remarked Herc, as they drove along the moon-flooded roads, "it seems to me

we're having pretty easy times for two able-bodied Boatswain's Mates."

"Wait till we get to work on board the Locker in real earnest," rejoined Ned. "I fancy you'll find a difference then. Of course, on special duty like this discipline is always relaxed a good deal, but when we get to sea again, even in a submarine, the old lines will be drawn."

"Oh Chowder!" grumbled Herc. "I suppose that means more of those everlasting sea-going chores."

"I guess so," laughed Ned; "but every day we do our full duty, Herc, we're getting closer to the goal we set ourselves back in Lamb's Corners—to make the best sailors we could of ourselves, and devote our best efforts for our country's good. A sailor can do that, too, just as well as some pork-fed politician who wallows in a lot of oratory about saving the nation."

"I wish there were a little less of deck-cleaning and brass work, though," complained Herc.

"Wait till we take our next step up," was Ned's

assurance. "We'll be able to live almost as easy as commissioned officers then."

"Hope so," muttered Herc; "things can't come too easy for me."

"And yet, you old Red Head," rejoined Ned affectionately, "when there's anything to be done, you're right there on the spot."

"Oh, well, that's when there's some excitement in it," was Herc's reply.

What with taking a wrong turn and some delay in getting just the sized flag they required, it was quite late when the lads started back for Grayport. In fact, as they neared the little seaside town, they could hear the clock in the old Dutch church strike midnight. It was the only sound to disturb the moonlit stillness. The town, seemingly, was wrapped in slumber. At any rate, not a light was to be seen.

"We're night owls, all right," laughed Herc.

Their road led around the seaward end of the village, skirting the high fence of the Lockyer boatyard. As they drew near Ned pulled up the horse with an abrupt jerk.

"What's the trouble?" asked Herc, in a whisper, however, as, while Ned had checked the horse with one hand, his other had gone up in a signal for silence.

"Why, I'm certain I saw some one scale that fence and drop over into the yard just as we were coming round that corner."

"Well, if there was, Mr. Lockyer has a watchman on duty," rejoined Herc.

"I know, but, Herc, think of what that yard contains,—all Channing Lockyer's hopes and aspirations. If that boat were to be injured I think it would kill him, coming as it would on the eve of her launching."

"That's so," agreed Herc; "maybe we'd better leave the horse here and do a little scouting."

"That's what I think," said Ned.

Presently the horse was tied and they were slipping forward almost noiselessly. They soon reached the fence at the spot where Ned thought he had seen some one climb over, and found that several nails had been driven in it at that point, making an ascent comparatively easy.

"Look, what's that at the top where the spikes are?" asked Herc suddenly, pointing to the tip-top of the fence on the spikes, surmounting which some dark object laid.

"It's a sack or something placed there so that the spikes will not hurt anybody climbing over," was the rejoinder. "That proves I was right. Somebody did go over and their object was——"

"The submarine!"

"That's right, and that watchman isn't on the job, or he'd have been at them by this time. Herc, it's up to us to do something. I've got half a suspicion who the rascal is, and if we don't get him, he may do damage that it will take months to repair. You know that Mr. Lockyer's funds won't hold out that long."

"Then over we go," declared Herc, starting to climb. With sailor-like activity, he was soon on the top of the fence, and found that a sack stuffed full of rags had been carefully laid on the top of the spikes. After him came Ned. In a jiffy they stood inside the yard, uncertain for an instant just what to do.

Strong in his conviction that it was the submarine that the midnight marauders were bent on attacking, Ned led the way across the yard, taking advantage of every shadow and the cover afforded by the outbuildings. As they neared the big shed in which the completed craft lay resting ready on her supports for the launching, they heard a sudden sharp, spluttering sound. Ned gripped Herc's arm and held him back. Fortunately, they were behind the corner of the office building and could see without being seen, unless they exposed themselves too much.

Following the sputtering sound, a match blazed up and illumined the faces of two figures bent over a lantern. They were going to light it before they entered the building.

"Two of them!" gasped Herc.

"Yes, and do you recognize them?" breathed back Ned.

"Thunder and turtles! One of them is that fellow Anderson."

"Yes, and the other is Gradbarr. I didn't know

he was in the village. He must have been hiding some place all this time."

"And Anderson must still have that key," whispered Herc, in a tremulous voice.

"That's so. Oh, don't I wish we could get the police. But I daren't leave here till we see what they are up to."

The next instant the lantern blazed up, and cautiously turning the flame low, the two slipped into the dark shadows of the construction shed.

"What are we going to do now?" asked Herc.

"Going after them," announced Ned grimly, and without an instant's hesitation.

It was necessary to use the utmost stealth in nearing the shed. For all that the Dreadnought Boys knew, the two rascals might be hiding inside ready to shoot them down as soon as they appeared. But, after waiting a while, they were rewarded by hearing the ring of the intruders' feet as they traversed the steel-plated deck.

"They've climbed the ladder, then," breathed Ned tremulously. The next instant a clanging sound announced that they had opened the man-

hole in the conning tower. As the sound was not repeated, the boys judged that they must have left it open. This made their task all the easier.

With their nerves at the keenest tension, the lads crept forward. Presently the dark shadows of the shed swallowed them. Creeping along like two prowling cats, they reached the midship section against which the ladder was propped.

Without another word Ned set his foot on the lowest round and mounted rapidly upward. Following him came Herc, his every sense a-tingle for what might lie ahead of them.

Having reached the deck, double caution became necessary, for fear that the ring of their feet on the metal might attract the attention of the marauders working inside the big cigar-shaped diving boat. Creeping on hands and knees, the better to dull all sound, they neared the conning tower. Still without a sound, Ned raised himself, and peering over, saw that the chamber below—which was now fitted with leather-backed divans and seats and partitioned staterooms, was

empty. The mischief-makers must then be in the fore part of the little vessel, in the torpedo room, already the scene of one of Gradbarr's dastardly attempts.

Beckoning to Herc, Ned swung himself down into the conning tower and swiftly dropped down, round by round, on the steel ladder. And now he had a view of the night's work the two dastards had contrived. The light of their lantern shone brightly out from the fore-chamber and cast a soft glow out in the cabin.

Peering through the bulkhead door, which Anderson's key had unlocked, the boys could see the precious pair bending over one of the intake pipes. Suddenly the rasping note of a file sounded out in the silence.

"Your boat will sink and you with it, Lockyer, when I get through to-night's work," the lads could hear Anderson grate out, as his tool began to bite into the metal. It was at this moment that Ned recollected, with a sinking of the heart, that neither Herc nor himself was armed. The men attempting the ruin of Lockyer's boat were un-

doubtedly well supplied with firearms in case of being surprised in their desperate game. How then were our lads to circumvent the rascals and check their ruinous work?

As Ned cudgelled his brains desperately—for every minute counted while that file was at work—the hulking form of Gradbarr swung across the floor of the lamp-lit chamber, and peered out into the darkness of the cabin.

“I thought I heard something out here,” he growled, in reply to Anderson’s muttered question.

Coming forward still farther, he rested his hand on the foot of the steel ladder and peered upward. A ray of the lamp fell full on his heavy, brutal features. That ray flashed for an instant on something gleaming that he carried in one hand—a pistol.

Ned noted all this in one quick flash, and then, with one of those impulses to quick action that come to us all sometimes, he let go his hold on the ladder and dropped with all his weight upon the ruffian. The Dreadnought Boy’s legs encir-

cled Gradbarr's neck, and before the man, taken entirely by surprise, could utter a sound, Ned's weight had borne him down to the steel-grated floor of the cabin.

CHAPTER VI.

THERE'S MANY A SLIP.

With a roar like that which might have been expected to proceed from an infuriated bull, rather than from the throat of a human being, the husky henchman of the Atlas Submarine interests struck out blindly. But his blows only encountered the steel floor, and barked the skin off his knuckles.

"Better save your breath and your blows, my man," warned Ned, who was seated comfortably astride the fellow's neck.

While this had been going on, Herc, deprived of movement for a second from sheer astonishment, had dropped lightly beside them. Seeing at a glance that Ned needed no help, he turned his attention to Anderson, who, hearing the commotion outside, had dropped his work and came running toward the door. The fellow's inherent cowardice showed in his pallid cheeks.

"W-w-what is it?" he gasped.

"Discovery, you precious hound!" explained Herc. Before Anderson could use the pistol he carried, the Dreadnought Boy's fist had struck it upward out of his hand. The weapon fell ringing on the metal flooring.

The next instant Herc had possession of it.

"Now get hold of this fellow's gun. I can't hold him much longer," gasped Ned, from his position on the recumbent Gradbarr's neck. While Ned held the fellow's wrist pinned tightly to the floor, Herc took possession of the pistol which Gradbarr still gripped.

"Blazes take you," fumed the fellow. "I'll make you sorry for this some day. I'll fix you."

"Then you'll have to defer it till after you get out of the penitentiary," shot out Ned. "We've caught you two in as precious a bit of knavery as was ever heard of."

As he spoke he let go of Gradbarr, and, springing nimbly aside out of the way of a possible sudden attack, allowed the man to rise. For one instant bovine rage flared on the fellow's sullen

features. But the next moment he seemed to realize that he was overmastered.

"Well, what are you going to do with us?" he demanded.

Anderson stood trembling by. Suddenly he broke into hysterical pleadings.

"For heaven's sake don't disgrace me," he begged. "Think of what it'll mean to me to go to prison."

"Think of what it would have meant to Mr. Lockyer if you had succeeded in undoing the work of a lifetime," rejoined Ned. "No, Anderson, I'm sorry for you, but you've got to take your medicine. I advise you to take it like a man. In any event, it is not for us to decide this matter. That must be left to Mr. Lockyer."

"Oh, cut out that preachy-preachy, and tell us what you are going to do with us," growled Gradbarr defiantly.

Now this was a bit of a problem. They could not very well manage the risky business of marching their prisoners out of the yard in the darkness. Too many opportunities for escape

presented themselves. Suddenly the solution flashed upon Ned. There was a heavy bar on the outside, or cabin side, of the bulkhead door. He would drive them into the torpedo room and deprive them of their tools. Then, with the door locked, they could be safely left in there till he summoned aid.

“March into that torpedo room,” he ordered, emphasizing his command by leveling his revolver.

“Confound you, I’ll see you hanged first,” snarled Gradbarr, making as if he was about to dare all and risk a dash for freedom. But something in the glint of Ned’s eyes at that instant stopped him.

“Are you going to get into that room, Gradbarr?” inquired the Dreadnought Boy, quietly and without a quaver in his voice, though his heart was beating wildly. What if the fellow wouldn’t go? Ned would not—could not—shoot him down in cold blood. Fortunately, however, Gradbarr gave sullen acquiescence to the sharp order by turning and reëntering the room in

which the lamp still stood on the floor. Anderson, whining and pleading by turns, followed him.

"Pick up their tools, Herc, while I keep them covered," ordered Ned.

In a few minutes the red-headed lad had the tools gathered up, while Ned kept two unwavering revolvers pointed at his prisoners.

"All ready, Ned," said Herc, at length.

"Then get that lantern and follow me. Don't move," ordered Ned, slowly backing out and not allowing his weapons to deviate an inch.

"You're going to leave us here in the dark?" inquired Gradbarr.

"It's the only safe thing to do," rejoined Ned.

As the two lads reached the door, Ned made a quick step backward and seized the hand rail on the outside of the room. He was only just in time, for the instant that he relaxed his vigilance Gradbarr made a desperate spring for him. But his leap was met, not by the lad's form, but by a ponderous mass of metal as the door swung to. The next moment the heavy clang of the bar on the cabin side falling into place ap-

prised both rascals, even had they required such notification, that they were prisoners.

"Phew!" exclaimed Ned, "I'm mighty glad that is over. One second more with that door and we'd have had a tussle on our hands. I don't admire Mr. Gradbarr, but he is certainly a fighter. He's all beef and brawn, mixed with steel alloy."

"What'll we do now?" asked Herc, as they could hear from the other side of the door Gradbarr's furious voice railing at them.

"Make tracks for the new foreman's house. He lives close to here, and then we must summon Mr. Lockyer and Lieutenant Parry," was the rejoinder.

"You don't think they'll do any harm in that torpedo room just out of rage at being captured?"

"Well, they can't do much harm. We've got their tools," rejoined Ned.

At the gate of the yard, they almost stumbled over a moving form asleep on a bench.

"It's the watchman," exclaimed Ned disgustedly. "He smells of liquor, too. He's a fine

guardian for such a valuable bit of property as that submarine."

"Shall we wake him?" asked Herc.

"No. What good would it do? Come on, we've no time to waste. Say, though, this fine specimen of a watchman has left his keys lying by his side. We'll just use them and save ourselves the trouble of climbing over the fence."

"Good idea," declared Ned, as they put it into execution, and hastened out of the yard.

Andy Bowler was tremendously excited when he had been aroused and made to understand what had taken place. He hastily dressed, and, as the boys had brought the rig with them from the place at which they had left it tied, they were hardly any time in reaching the hotel. Here Lieutenant Parry was awakened and the news communicated to him. Mr. Lockyer was summoned by telephone and soon joined them.

"How can I ever thank you," he exclaimed warmly, as he met the party. "Boys, if that boat had been damaged to-night, it would have been a death blow to all my hopes. I don't mind being

frank enough to tell you that I would not have had enough capital left to indulge in any very extensive repairs."

All haste was made in returning to the yard, and the first thing that was done was to awaken the watchman. What he heard about himself immediately thereafter must have made his ears burn for the remainder of his lifetime. The wretched man, half fuddled with liquor, lost no time in staggering off, and the next day left the village.

This done, the party proceeded to the submarine shed, having first provided themselves with lanterns at the storeroom. A deadly silence hung over the place as they entered instead of the half-smothered yells and shouts the lads had expected to hear.

"I guess they realize they're in a thick box," said Lieutenant Parry, "and so are saving their breath for another occasion. Now then, let's get below."

So saying, he swung himself down inside the conning tower, followed by the others. At the

steel door in the bulkhead they paused. But there was not a sound from within.

"Gradbarr and Anderson," shouted Mr. Lockyer, pounding on the door, "I wish to tell you in case you feel like making any resistance that we are all armed and shall not hesitate to use our weapons."

There was no reply. In the intense stillness one could hear the creaking, crackling sounds that always are present in a metal boat, as the material of which she is constructed contracts after a warm day.

"Better open up," said Lieutenant Parry. "Mr. Lockyer, you stand at the foot of the ladder and be ready to shoot in case of trouble. We'll open the door and try to collar the fellows without hurting them if they rush out."

Clang!

The metal bar dropped as Ned pulled it out of its hasp. But there was still no sound from within.

The next moment the inventor's party had swung the portal wide open. But the expected

rush did not come, nor was there a sound to show that the dark torpedo-room was occupied.

"Bring a light here," ordered Lieutenant Parry. "I believe——"

But there was no need for him to finish his sentence. Ned's upraised lantern showed every nook and corner of the place.

It was empty of life.

It was almost immediately apparent how the two prisoners had effected their escape. Forward, where one of the after-base plates of the torpedo tubes had not been bolted in place, there was an easy means of exit which the lads, to their chagrin, had not noticed before. Evidently, all that Gradbarr and Anderson had had to do to gain their liberty was to enter the torpedo tube and crawl through.

"Good gracious," cried Ned, vexed beyond measure; "we must have been blind or foolish or both not to have noticed that opening."

The lieutenant, however, placed his hand comfortingly upon the disgusted lad's shoulder.

"Never mind, my lad," he said; "you are not

the first boy—or man, for that matter—who has forgotten that there are more ways than one out of a difficulty. Is it any use pursuing them, I wonder?” he went on, turning to Mr. Lockyer.

“If you ask my advice I should reply in the negative,” was the answer. “No doubt they are both far away by this time.”

“And good riddance, too,” muttered Herc to himself, an opinion which was shared by the others.

“At any rate, we’ll have a good guard here for the remainder of the night,” said the foreman, and, in accordance with his resolution that no more attempts would be made on the boat with his knowledge, the faithful fellow passed the rest of the night on board. As for the others, with plenty to ponder over, they returned to the hotel, where they slept soundly till the dawn of the day which was to witness the launching of “Lockyer’s Dream.”

CHAPTER VII.

“I NAME YOU ‘LOCKYER.’ ”

Somehow one is always prone to associate the idea of a launching of a vessel of any kind with crowds, gaiety, and blaring brass bands. Except for the fact, however, that a brand-new flag floated above the boatyard on the day that the long-expected event was to take place, there was no sign that anything unusual was going on.

All hands reported at the yard early, the workmen in their best clothes, the naval contingent in uniforms. A few finishing touches remained to be put upon the boat, and the slight damage done by Anderson's file to be adjusted. A little more than an hour sufficed for this, however, and then all was ready.

“At last,” breathed Mr. Lockyer, as the foreman, with a formal touch of his cap, said:

“We're ready when you are, sir.”

Lieutenant Parry tried to look unconcerned,

but under his naval mask of indifference it could be seen that he was excited. As for the boys, their faces shone with anticipation. Old Tom Marlin went about with a broad grin on his face, clapping everybody on the shoulder and singing snatches of musty sea chanties.

As might have been expected, word had spread that there was something unusual going on at the yard. By the time all was in readiness quite a crowd had gathered. Several persons tried to get in at the gate, but they were ruthlessly informed that no one would be admitted. As the next best thing, they made for points of vantage along the beach outside the fence; for, by some species of wireless telegraphy, there was now a well-defined rumor that " 'Lockyer's Dream' was to take to the water that morning."

"Wonder what we're waiting for?" mused Ned, as ten o'clock struck and still Mr. Lockyer paced nervously up and down, without giving the signal to go aboard. Some workmen, hammers in hand, stood about ready to knock out the remaining props as soon as the word should be

given, and send the grim diving torpedo boat sliding down the ways into the sea.

"Tide'll turn before long, sir," ventured the foreman, stepping up to Mr. Lockyer. The inventor gave a sigh and seemed to start out of a reverie.

"Very well, then," he said. "I guess you may as well give the order to go ahead."

But as he spoke, from outside the fence there came a sudden interruption to the hush of suspense that had settled over the occupants of the boatyard and the crowd outside.

The sharp "honk-honk" of an auto could be heard as it was urged through the curious crowd clustered outside the gates. A sudden change came over the inventor as he heard it. His gloom seemed to vanish like magic, and he made for the gate in great bounds. Reaching it, he flung it open himself, and a touring car, driven by a liveried chauffeur and containing two passengers, was driven into the yard. To the astonishment of the boys, one of the occupants of the car was a singularly beautiful young woman, and the other

a stout, gray-whiskered man in a frock coat, white waistcoat and many other outward and accepted trappings of wealth.

The inventor—an odd contrast to the daintily gowned girl and the smartly tailored old man, in his greasy overalls which he had donned for the launching—was at the side of the car in an instant, aiding the young woman to alight. This done, he extended a hand to the old man, but the latter spurned it.

“I can help myself, Lockyer,” he snapped out; “not too old for that yet. So to-day is the day that you are going to launch that insane myth of yours—the cruising submarine?”

“It is, Mr. Pangloss,” rejoined the inventor, “and I feel very much flattered that you have decided to be present on the occasion.”

“Oh, you have to thank me for that,” flashed the young woman with a radiant smile. “I told you we would not fail you, and you see we haven’t.”

“Thank you,” breathed the inventor, in a low tone. “I felt sure you would be here if it were

possible. *You*, at least, have always believed in me."

"And so will dad when the Lockyer is afloat," laughed the young woman gaily. "James," she went on, turning to the chauffeur, "get that basket out of the tonneau. You see, Mr. Lockyer," she smiled, "I have not forgotten that I am to christen the boat, and we have brought the baptismal font with us."

"Hum," remarked Lieutenant Parry, turning to Midshipman Stark, "there's Lockyer's romance. It's easy to see that."

"Well, I hope he wins out," was the rejoinder. "He's a good fellow and she is one of the most beautiful girls I have ever seen. But her father—for I guess the old man is her father—doesn't seem to approve."

Indeed the old man had been stamping about the yard, poking at castings and odd bits of machinery with his cane, and asking sharp questions of the different workmen. Presently Mr. Lockyer introduced his guests as Miss Vivian Pangloss and her father, Peregrine Pangloss. The

girl smiled gracefully through the introductions, but her father, on the other hand, seemed anxious to assert his entire disbelief in the submarine and all who had anything to do with it.

"It's nonsense, gentlemen, nonsense!" he asserted emphatically. "Man's place in nature is on the earth or on the surface of the waters. He has no business either to fly in the air or to dive under the ocean."

"In that event you would naturally limit human progress," put in Lieutenant Parry.

"And what of it, sir? What of it?" puffed old Mr. Pangloss. "I have lived for sixty years, sir, and all that time have managed to get along without any such nonsensical things, and so did my ancestors before me. It's obvious, then, that there is no need of them. Mankind is better off without them."

"But in case of war, sir," put in Midshipman Stark. "If the Lockyer is as capable a submarine as we hope she will prove to be, the nation possessing her will be years ahead of any other, at least, so far as naval warfare is concerned."

"Bah, sir! War ought to be abolished," snapped the old man. "I'd like to shoot or hang everybody who talks about war, or is connected with it in any way."

"Suppose we take a look over the boat before she is launched," suggested the inventor, tactfully changing the subject.

"Oh, that would be the very thing," cried Miss Pangloss excitedly. "I am sure it is a wonderful boat and will be a great success."

"It will—it must be, if you wish it," said the inventor, in so low a tone, however, that the others did not catch it.

"I will look at the boat," announced Mr. Pangloss bristlingly, "but I want it distinctly understood that I do not endorse the principles for which she stands. Warfare and bloodshed are distasteful to me, odious—detestable!"

"Gee, he makes more disturbance about it than a whole battery of guns," whispered Herc to Ned, as the boys and Tom Marlin fell in the rear of the party.

"Most of these peace agitators do," was Ned's

rejoinder. "They forget that the rivalry between nations is not a theory, but a condition. The first nation to fall behind in her defenses will be the first to fall a prey to the others."

"Say," whispered old Tom Marlin hoarsely, "I know that whiskered craft Pangloss. I've seed his picters in ther papers. He's a crank of peace. He was speaking at one peace meeting where some one disagreed with him and he busted a water pitcher over their heads.

"'I will have peace,' says he, 'if we've got ter have war ter git it.'"

"He must be Irish," laughed Ned. "Seriously, though, now you speak of it, I do recall who he is."

"A celebrity?" inquired Sim, who had been quite overawed by the fiery manner of the apostle of peace.

"In a way, yes. He amassed a fortune manufacturing steel."

"The material of which warships are built, eh?" chuckled Herc; "that's a good one. If it

hadn't been for the navy, where would he have been."

"Not only that," went on Ned, "but I understand that in his eagerness to get contracts he did not hesitate to stump the country at one time, advocating a bigger navy and more guns."

"And now he has his fortune he's blowing cold again," put in Tom.

"Seems so. But just look how attentively Mr. Lockyer is bending over the old man's daughter. She's looking up at him, too, as if she thought a whole lot of him. Look at the old man glaring at them. I'll bet he's mad."

Ned guessed just right. Years before, when Lockyer was just out of college, he had obtained employment as a chemist in the Pangloss Steel Works at Pittsburg. As he accepted the position more for experience than for the pay, which was small—his father allowing him an ample allowance—he naturally had some good introductions. Among the homes he visited had been that of his employer, where he met Miss Vivian. She had been deeply interested in the young man's

work, and when the submarine idea—upon which he was working at the time—was complete, he made her his confidant.

Old Mr. Pangloss had, at first, been glad to welcome Lockyer to his home. When the chemist's father died, however, and did not leave as large a fortune as had been anticipated, the old man looked upon the growing friendship between his daughter and the inventor from another viewpoint. He had, in fact, discouraged his visits. That morning was the first time the inventor and the girl he had grown to love had met in many months. Her arrival was in response to a promise made a long time before, that she would be there to christen the Lockyer when it took to the water. Much against her father's wishes, therefore, they had come. It was Lockyer's belief that she would redeem that promise that had kept him delaying the launching till the last moment.

The purpose of a small platform erected near the Lockyer's bow now became apparent. It was for the fair sponsor of the vessel to stand upon while she shattered the bottle against the steel

prow, according to time-honored custom. As she took her place upon the little stand, she gave Lockyer a look full of confidence and trust, and a bright light shone in the inventor's eyes as he followed the others to the deck of the diving craft. There was new confidence in his step, his head was thrown back, and he fairly radiated assurance.

"Better give the word as soon as possible," whispered Lieutenant Parry to the foreman, who stood beside him. "We don't want to try Lockyer's nerves more than necessary."

Now the ladder was kicked away from the steel side of the craft. It had been used for the last time. In obedience to a nod from Lieutenant Parry, Ned took his place at the deck wheel forward of the conning tower. The entire front of the shed had been removed for the launching, and they could see stretched before them the sparkling waters of the Sound. In the distance was the dim blue outline of the Connecticut shore.

"All ready!" hailed the foreman over the side.

A quiver of excitement ran through every man

on that steel deck. In a few minutes now they would know whether the initial trial of the craft was to be a success or a failure.

Below, a terrific clattering of sledges started up. The workmen were swinging their hammers against the wooden props, knocking out the remaining retaining wedges. When the last one was knocked clear, the submarine would begin to shoot down the greased ways.

"Right below!" shouted a workman from beneath. Those on the deck knew that his words meant that only one wedge remained to be knocked loose.

Mr. Lockyer was gripping the rail, his face turned toward the platform upon which stood Miss Pangloss and her father. His face was ghastly pale, though his eyes shone brightly. His nervous grasp on the rail whitened his knuckles as he gripped it.

The girl, a brave smile upon her lips, held the bottle ready poised. The silken ribbons which fluttered from its neck moved slightly in the light breeze sweeping in from the unruffled Sound. In

that moment of tension even old Mr. Pangloss looked interested. The naval officers stood without blinking an eyelid or betraying any outward sign of emotion—as their training required.

“All right!” the command came from Mr. Lockyer. His voice shook as he uttered it. He caught his breath sharply.

The foreman echoed the word in stentorian tones.

“Let her go, boys!”

Boom!

The supreme moment had come.

The hammer fell upon that last wedge. A sharp quiver ran through the steel structure of the diving boat. It was the first stirring of life within her frame.

“She’s off!”

Old Tom Marlin, forgetful of discipline, had uttered the sharp cry. It had been wrung from him by the tension of the moment as the submarine began to move.

Crash!

The bottle smashed across the prow. Its con-

tents gushed sparkling and bubbling down her gray sides. Then, in a clear, girlish voice, came the words so fraught with meaning to the inventor. There was not a quiver in the girl's voice, though her eyes were strangely bright as she exclaimed:

"I name thee 'Lockyer.' May you always prove worthy of your flag, your service, and your name!"

"Hurroo!"

Mr. Lockyer, coolest of all now, waved his cap confidently at the dainty sponsor.

The wild cheer came from the workmen. It was caught up and echoed by the excited men on the deck of the now moving boat, and went swelling out on the still air till the crowd outside caught it up and gave it back with a will.

Even Mr. Pangloss's iron jaw relaxed as he watched the inspiring sight of tons of steel shooting toward the sea at express speed. As Ned clutched the steering wheel every nerve in his body throbbed. The exciting thrill of motion ran through them all.

Down shot the submarine. As she neared the water, Lieutenant Parry darted back to the stern staff. Seizing the halliards, he ran the flag—rolled up in a ball as yet—to the truck.

Sp-l-a-s-h!"

The white spray flew high. It descended in sparkling clouds, drenching everybody on the deck as the Lockyer shot forward into the water. Forward and outward she sped, straight and true as an arrow, her young helmsman holding her right on her course.

"Hurrray!"

The shout came volleying from the crowded beach.

The officer jerked the halliards. Out from the jack-staff burst the splendor of the stars and stripes—Old Glory!

What a yell went up then. The crowd clustered on the beach shrieked and danced with excitement till they were hoarse. The workmen in the yard dragged out an old saluting cannon and blazed and blazed away. Even Mr. Pangloss gave a discreet chirrup which he intended, he in-

formed his daughter apologetically later on, as a cheer. As Old Glory floated out, all on board bared their heads, and, turning toward our flag, stiffly saluted.

Losing her impetus, the Lockyer slackened speed, hesitated, and then stopped. At the same instant, with a whirr and clatter, her anchor roared down, entering the water with a splash. The latest, most novel submarine was launched.

What did the future hold in store for her?

CHAPTER VIII.

TO THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE SEA.

“Everything is as shipshape as if she had been afloat for a year.”

A minute inspection of the newly launched craft, not forgetting a nook or corner, had just been completed. Once more they stood on the upper deck. Immediately after the launching the Lockyer had been left afloat with a crew of workmen, in charge of the boys on board her, while the naval party went ashore.

“You have justified my belief in you,” was part of what Miss Pangloss said to the happy inventor, as he stepped from the boat that brought them back.

“I’ll believe in that boat when she does something worth while,” were Mr. Pangloss’s words. How strangely this was to be brought about not one of them dreamed, although Lockyer answered with a new confidence:

"She will, Mr. Pangloss, and when she does I'm going to ask you for something."

"I can guess what it is," was the grim rejoinder; "but you are a young man still, and do not come to me till you have 'made good.' But you must not mind if I am rather savage to-day, Lockyer," he went on more kindly. "I've just had bad news. While we were down this way I visited my summer residence at Sandbeach, ten miles from here. In the absence of my caretaker it has been robbed by Sound pirates of every stick of furniture."

"You amaze me!" exclaimed Mr. Lockyer. The naval officers who had heard this last also expressed their sympathy.

"Just when I am getting ready to start on a yachting trip, too," went on the old man; "most annoying, most annoying. Now Lockyer, if your submarine could catch those pirates, I'd say she was worth while."

"I sincerely wish that she could, sir," was the rejoinder. And Lockyer meant it, too. In fact, there was nobody on earth whom he more ar-

dently desired to please than the peppery, irritable old apostle of peace.

Soon after, the old millionaire and his daughter left. But what a change had come over Lockyer! All the doubt and uncertainty of the past anxious months had left him. He could hardly keep his eyes off the visualized realization of his dream. At the hotel where they had lunch quite a crowd had gathered. Every one was eager to shake his hand and tell the inventor how they had always believed in him,—even those who had been most confident that the Lockyer would only take one dive, and that would be to the bottom.

The first thing the shore party did was to don dry clothing, which, it may be said, was also done by those on board the craft. The platform deck would be awash in bad weather, and, as the Lockyer lay at anchor, it was not more than two feet above the gently lapping waves. The warm sun, however, soon dried off the plates.

As may be imagined, the party did not linger over their meal. It was hastily dispatched and a

return at once made to the submarine. Several of the curious crowd still lingered. Among them were several persons with field glasses. They eyed the queer-shaped floating thing with avidity. As our party shoved off, another cheer was given, which Mr. Lockyer and the officers replied to by waving their caps.

The hearts of all were light and felt as if a load had been lifted from them. However, much stern work lay ahead before the Lockyer could be called a complete success.

As soon as they set foot on board once more, Mr. Lockyer called the workmen about him and thanked all heartily for their share in the success that had crowned the day.

"Sure, we'd 'a' done anything fer you, Mister Lockyer!" exclaimed one burly fellow, stepping forward, cap in hand. "Boys, three cheers fer Mr. Lockyer, and may he hev the success he deserves."

The cheers were given with a will, but there was more serious work ahead than cheering. The boat had to be completely cleaned up from fore-

peak to the stern. Neither of the Dreadnought Boys or their companion knew anything of the further plans of the inventor and the officers. It was not till late afternoon, in fact, after a meal had been cooked by Tom Marlin on the galley stove in the little room back of the cabin, and eaten on the folding table, that future plans were explained.

“Gentlemen,” said Mr. Lockyer, addressing the officers, when they were all assembled in the cabin, “my part of the work is over. The verdict lies in your hands. I take great pleasure in turning over to you the Lockyer for any tests you may see fit to submit her to.”

Lieutenant Parry thanked him formally, and informally added:

“And I’m sure there isn’t a man here, Mr. Lockyer, whose respect you have not won, and who doesn’t believe in you and in your craft. My first duty, however, is to my government, and we are here to make a full and impartial test. To-night, if everything is in readiness, I would like to have you take the boat out toward the Red

Rock lighthouse and back. That will give us a chance to see what she can do."

Mr. Lockyer nodded. Then he and Bowler hastened off to give his engines a last overhauling, while the naval party busied themselves in various ways.

To Ned and Herc it seemed as if the evening would never come. Seated on deck with old Tom and young Sim,—the latter was to form one of the crew,—they discussed the wonderful craft in every aspect. While submarines were not new things to either of the Dreadnought Boys, a craft of the complete nature of the Lockyer was a novelty. They were deeply interested in the coming test.

Supper was cooked on board and eaten by the crew. The officers and Mr. Lockyer ate ashore, the others taking their places afterward. Then followed a restless period of waiting till it grew dark and there was little chance of their being observed from the shore. Mr. Lockyer was not anxious, nor were the naval officers, to have it bruited aboard that they intended to put to sea

that very night. Such news would have been certain to bring out a swarm of small craft to watch the start, and, accordingly, the workmen, when they went ashore, had been instructed to say that the trial trip would not take place for some time. A few trustworthy ones had been detained on board.

It was nine o'clock or later when Mr. Lockyer, turning to the lieutenant, said:

"If you are ready, Mr. Parry, everything is in trim for a start."

"Very well, then," was the response. "We'll lose no time in getting under way."

Some time before, the dynamo, which, like the engine, was driven by compressed air, had been started, and a soft radiance from electric lights, screened by ground glass shades, filled the little vessel. Not a light showed outside her dark hull, however, with the exception of her anchor light run up on the jack-staff aft.

"Strong and Taylor, your stations for to-night will be in the conning tower," said the lieutenant. "Mr. Lockyer, your crew, under Bowler, will re-

main in the engine room. I don't feel that we are quite familiar enough with the machinery yet to run the risk of an accident."

The boys hastened to the conning tower, while the others remained below to watch the first revolutions of the engines. First, however, with a rattle and subdued purring sound, an electric winch brought the anchor home. The Lockyer instantly swung to the tide, floating free.

But it was only for an instant. As the word came from forward in old Tom's voice:

"Anchor home, sir!" the inventor shoved over a lever affixed to the after bulkhead of the cabin space.

"Ready!" he said.

The lieutenant bounded into the conning tower, anxious to have the honor of giving the first signal. Seizing the lever of the telegraph, he signaled below to the anxious engine room force:

"Go ahead. Slow!"

Lockyer's eyes burned, and his lips were so dry that he was compelled to moisten them as he gave the lever a shove. Instantly a tremor shot

through the drifting little vessel. At the same moment a bright flash of metal shone in the engine room, as the light gleamed on the first revolution of the crank shaft.

"Head out of the harbor, Strong!" ordered the lieutenant, gripping Ned's shoulder, as he stood behind him. Ned spun the spokes over, and the Lockyer obediently swung round. Then, with her engines purring as sweetly as a dozing cat's lullaby, the submarine slipped noiselessly out of Grayport.

Coming forward into the cabin, the inventor turned a switch which controlled the red and green lights on either side of the bow. It was necessary to have these on, as big steamers, crowded with passengers for Boston, run up the Sound at night. Besides, the waters are usually pretty well dotted with sailing craft and small coasting steamers.

"Come ahead on your speed now," whispered the inventor, slipping up the steel stairway into the darkened conning-tower. Under the starlight the broad Sound, gently heaving, lay be-

fore them. Ned's hand slid to the telegraph. In instant response to the signal, the triple screws of the Lockyer began to churn the water faster.

"Fifteen knots!" exclaimed the inventor, gazing at the speed indicator, which was illuminated by a hooded light, "and we haven't begun to go yet. Wait till that engine gets limbered up."

"Keep her east and a little north," ordered the officer, peering into the binnacle, "we'll pick up the light on that course."

Forward forged the Lockyer with hardly a vibration. So easily did she ride, in fact, that it was difficult to realize the speed at which they were proceeding. Lockyer, his face aglow, kept running up and down the ladder between the engine room and the conning-tower.

"We've cut off the gas now," he said when he returned from one of these errands; "we are now proceeding under compressed air alone."

"And the speed hasn't dropped a hundredth part of a knot!" exclaimed the officer, glancing

at the speed indicator. "Lockyer, she's a marvel."

"Officially?" said the inventor with a happy laugh.

"Well-er no. It's a bit early for that, you know," rejoined the officer cautiously. He knew that the Navy Department would require far more rigid and extended tests before they would pay out money for a contract.

"There's clear sea-way ahead. Not a light to be seen, sir," said Midshipman Stark presently.

"Right you are, Stark," rejoined the lieutenant. "Strong, let's have a little more speed. That is, if it won't strain the engines, Mr. Lockyer. They're new and stiff yet."

"But capable of their best efforts almost," cried the delighted Lockyer.

There was a slight click as Ned shoved the telegraph over once more.

They could fairly feel the impulse then. As her propellers bit into the water the submarine

gave a leap forward, almost like a pickerel after a plump frog.

"Jumping Jobberwocks! feel her go," muttered Herc to old Tom Marlin, as the two stood down at the foot of the ladder, ready to transmit any messages from the conning-tower above.

Andy Bowler, the foreman, poked out a grinning face from his engine room. He was wiping his hands on a bit of waste and drawing his first free breath.

"She's a daisy," he breathed, and the words, meaningless in themselves, conveyed his deep feeling. Then he dodged back again.

"Douse her with oil, boys," he ordered his crew; "remember she's new and her bearings are stiff."

For some time they ran on thus, occasionally turning in wide circles and cutting figure-eights to test her general handiness. All at once the inventor turned an anxious face to the naval officers.

"Gentlemen," he said, and his voice quavered strangely, "you have seen what she can do on

the surface. But we must not forget that the Lockyer was built for diving."

In the dim radiance shed by the binnacle they could see that Lockyer's face was furrowed and ghastly. Yet he did not shrink from the supreme test.

"Is she ready to dive?" asked Lieutenant Parry, without a flicker of the smallest facial muscle. He might have been asking the most ordinary question.

"As ready as she'll ever be," was the rejoinder. "If you say the word, we'll submerge her. I—I must know."

"Very well, then," was the hearty reply; "we'll soon find out what sort of a fish the Lockyer is. Boys, get everything ready for diving. I'll take the wheel."

Ned sped below, and he and his comrades at once set about getting things in readiness for the great test. They had been well drilled in this ashore, and knew exactly what to do. First, the sailing lights were turned off. Then, in came

the long, sky-pointing fingers of the periscope and the air tube.

In the engine room the heaters of the compressed-air containers were started up, and the gauges soon showed how the air was expanding under the heat. At a touch of a button fans were set whirring so as to keep the air pure as long as possible, and economise on their spare supply. Every bolt and rivet of the conning-tower and torpedo tubes were seen to. At last all was in readiness.

"All right below, sir!" hailed up Ned, when everything had been attended to.

"S-w-i-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-h!"

A hissing sound filled the boat as the lieutenant, with a turn of his wrist, set in motion the machinery which filled the submerged tanks. Beneath their feet they could feel the little vessel begin to settle as the weight grew heavier.

"Wow!" exclaimed Herc, "suppose she doesn't come up again?"

"Jee-rus-a-hos-o-phat!" cried old Tom, "this

goin' down in a new-fangled craft like this gives me the creeps alright."

Ned said nothing, but his heart beat with unpleasantly strenuous leaps. Slowly, deliberately, like a wounded water-thing, the submarine settled. Now the waves were awash of her tower, and presently the water was rising about the thick lenses.

A perceptible chill was manifest in the air, and always sounded in their ears that ominous, swishing, rushing sound. At last, to Ned's intense relief, the tanks were filled. A glance at the submarine gauge, on the wall of the cabin, showed that they were already twenty feet down.

"Hang on, everybody," came a hail from the conning-tower, "we're going to dive!"

"Good land!" gasped Herc, "it's all off now. Wish I was back on the farm."

Standing wedged beside the officers in the narrow conning-tower, Channing Lockyer breathed a silent prayer. The fruition or the blasting of his hopes was at hand. The moment was more fraught with stress than any he had ever known.

Suddenly, the swishing sound came again. A lever, shoved over on its quadrant by the young naval officer, had set the compressed air at work, driving the water out of the stern tanks. As they emptied, the boat pitched by her head till she sloped at quite a steep angle.

“Hang on with your toe-nails,” yelled old Tom, “here she goes! Down to the tie-ribs of the earth!”

As he spoke, the engines began their song once more. Down—down—driven by the force of her triple screws, the Lockyer dived. Into the dark profundities they shot, down amidst the hidden mysteries of the sea, while their pulses beat wildly.

CHAPTER IX.

SCHOONER, AHOY!

With her company silent as graven images at the sheer wonder of it, the submarine continued her plunge into the depths. Up in the conning-tower Lockyer clutched a hand-rail, holding on till his nails dug into his flesh. Every sense within him was singing an anthem of praise. His diving torpedo boat was, indeed, proving herself worthy of the confidence he had placed in her.

“Better set her on an even keel now!” he reminded Lieutenant Parry, presently.

Till that moment the officer had forgotten everything but the wonderful fact that the boat was diving—diving as if she had never been used to anything else.

Instantly the officer set the needful machinery in motion, and silently the after tanks began to fill. The water was sucked in through the sea-

valves, with hardly a sound, now that they were running where the pressure of the water was more intense. Fifty feet now showed upon the gauge. Lieutenant Parry scanned the chart in front of him, illuminated by a hooded light.

"We've got plenty of sea room under our keel," he said; "the chart gives us 400 fathoms here. Lockyer, I'm glad, old man, for your sake, and for the sake of somebody else."

"Thanks," said Lockyer simply, and though they could not see his face, they knew that it softened as he thought of the girl who had christened his diving boat.

"Here, boys, come up in the conning-tower," ordered the naval officer presently, "Mr. Stark and I want to take a look about below."

So it came about that, presently, Ned had the wheel once more in his hands. "What's the course, sir?" he inquired, as the officer relinquished the spokes.

"Two points north of west," was the response; "keep her on it till further orders."

Ned saluted, and the officer went below, leav-

ing the young steersman, Herc, Tom Marlin, and Sim in the conning-tower.

It was an eerie, strange feeling, this, of steering such a craft through the inky expanse spread about. Viewed through the lenses of the tower, the blackness seemed almost solid. Through the inky depths the submarine, a blind, swift-moving monster, nosed her way. Not so swift-moving now though, for her speed had been slowed down to a bare ten miles.

"Well?" asked Ned, as the officers vanished in the wake of the inventor for an inspection of the engine room.

"Well?" sighed Herc, "how about you?"

"It's great," cried Ned enthusiastically; "I tell you though, it gives a fellow a funny feeling, steering right ahead into the darkness. Seems as if you were butting into something solid all the time."

"W-w-w-what would happen if we ran into a water-logged hull?" asked little Sim, with a bit of a quaver in his voice.

"Or hit a weak-fish?" chuckled Herc.

"I tell you, lads," put in old Tom solemnly, "if we ever hit a wreck goin' at this clip, it would be either the wreck, or us. With chances in favor of the wreck."

"Reckon that's so," rejoined Ned, with a bit of a nervous catch in his voice; "we'd crumple up like a busted egg-shell."

"Not much doubt of that, lad," agreed the old tar, in a sepulchral voice.

"Oh say, you fellows ought to have been undertakers," exclaimed Herc, impatiently; "for my part,—rattlesnakes and rickshaws! I'm going to enjoy the ride and not worry about what might happen."

"That's right," heartily rejoined Ned; "it's no use worrying about what might happen. Suppose Dewey had worried about that at Manila. If you want to do any supposing, just suppose that we are creeping along now up under a hostile battleship. Presently, we will be ordered forward into the torpedo-room, and at the word of command we'll launch one of our Whiteheads. We wouldn't hear a sound, but as we sneaked

off we'd know that we'd justified our existence. Done what we were built for."

"Suppose we change the subject," suggested the red-headed lad; "let's talk about the farm. Wouldn't old gran'pa be scared if we had him down here?"

"Not any more so than he was that time he fell into the well, I imagine," laughed Ned. "Isn't it wonderful, though, old fellow, to think that not more than a year ago we were doing fall plowing, and now here we are, down fifty—no fifty-two feet—under the waves——"

"And plowing along still," grinned Herc, "but we've got 3,000 horse-power behind us now instead of being hitched on to that spavined old mare and the green, wall-eyed colt."

Down below, the officers and Mr. Lockyer were here, there and everywhere; testing, tapping, trying. But there did not seem to be a hitch. Every joint was as tight as a drum under the terrific pressure now exerted on the steel sides, and, except for the "sweating" of the steel, the boat was as dry as a bone.

Stepping to the compressed-air gauges, the inventor scanned them carefully. One of them showed a slight decrease in pressure. Once more the electric radiators were put into action, expanding the air at once.

"How's the engine?" asked Lieutenant Parry, pausing by Andy Bowler, as he bent above the shining, moving bits of mechanism, each sliding and flashing in and out at its own appointed time.

"Running sweet as a baby's sleep, sir," was the whimsical response; "we've got her well doused with oil, and there's not a bearing that's even warm."

"Pretty good for a new engine, eh, Mr. Parry?" smiled Channing Lockyer.

"It is, indeed, sir," was the response; "I must say, that from what I have seen, that your compressed-air engine has an electric one beaten fifteen ways for submarine use."

"Well, there's only one thing left to complete this part of the programme," said the lieutenant,

as they sank down on the comfortable leather-upholstered seats in the cabin.

"And that is?" asked Midshipman Stark.

"To rise again, to be sure," struck in the inventor.

Up in the conning-tower the boys could hear the conversation below distinctly.

"Hammocks and humming birds!" gasped Herc, "blessed if I hadn't quite forgotten about the rising part of it."

"It's quite important, though," said Ned, with a dry smile.

"Above there!" came a sudden hail from below in Lieutenant Parry's voice.

"Aye, aye, sir!" bawled back Ned.

"Do you understand how to work the air-changing device?"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Then set it in motion, please. We wish to test how quickly we can get a fresh supply."

Ned reached above his head, and turned a valve, which, by an ingeniously simple arrangement, opened the exhaust valve by which the bad

air was driven out and admitted a fresh supply at the same time.

"I did begin to notice the air getting a little stale," commented Herc; as he did so, "Ah-h-h-h-h!" he exclaimed the next instant, throwing out his chest and inflating his lungs with the fresh air which, as if by magic, flooded the place, "that's as good as a sea breeze."

And so they all agreed. The air had been getting fouler than they had really noticed in their intense concentration on the running of the boat.

"Well," said the lieutenant below, "there's no doubt about that device working as well as everything else about the Lockyer. And now let us see about getting to the surface. We must, according to my calculations, be not far off the light by this time."

"Very well, then," said Mr. Lockyer, with a confident smile. "It's ho! for the surface. And here, gentlemen," he said, producing a long, shiny bit of metal with a slot on one end, "is the means by which we are to get there."

So saying, he stepped to the side of the cabin where, against the wall, appeared the top of a valve. Fitting the slot of the wrench over this projection, he gave a gentle twist. Instantly a swishing sound followed, not unlike the loud screaming hiss of escaping steam from the safety valve of a locomotive.

"The biggest air pumps we have are now at work driving out the water from all the tanks simultaneously," he explained; "the water is being expelled at the rate of hundreds of gallons a minute."

"Queer we don't feel that we are rising," commented the naval officer; "the balance in this boat seems to be better preserved than in the present type. She does not tip or tilt at all on her upward way."

"Yet we are rising," said the inventor. He pointed to the depth indicator.

Its hand was rising rapidly. First, it showed thirty, then twenty, then ten, and then five feet.

"We're awash, sir," came a surprised hail from the conning-tower the next instant.

"Of course we are," cried Channing Lockyer delightedly. "I didn't tell you boys we were going to rise, because I wished to try to take you by surprise. I see I have succeeded in doing so."

"You certainly have," rejoined Ned; "why, I couldn't even feel any noticeable shifting of the course."

"Now, gentlemen, come on deck and see the stars," smiled Channing Lockyer, leading the way up the steel ladder. In a jiffy he had the cover of the conning-tower opened, and out they stepped upon the wet decks. A gentle swell was running, upon which the slowly moving submarine rose and fell evenly.

"Why this is the very poetry of motion!" cried Lieutenant Parry delightedly.

Above the party shone the steady stars, brightly reflected on the heaving expanse of waters, as if they would twinkle a welcome to this visitor from old Neptune's realm. For a few seconds the sheer exultation of it filled them to the exclusion of all else. Then Mr. Lockyer, poking

his head over the conning-tower top, ordered some more speed.

Obediently the little diver forged ahead, her swifter motion now sending the spray flying back over her decks—or, rather, back. But not one of the absorbed party on the surface minded that. Clinging to the handrails round the edge of the tower, they were enjoying every minute of it, when there came a sudden hail from the naval officer.

“What’s that dead ahead there? It looks like a schooner’s sails blotting out the stars.”

“I see it,” rejoined the inventor, “it is a vessel of some sort.”

“And without lights,” said Midshipman Stark; “as naval officers we ought to give them a warning, sir.”

“What do you say, Lockyer?” asked the officer; “shall we overhaul them and give them a surprise?”

“By all means,” was the answer; “this craft was built for duty on the high seas, you know.”

“Hand me out the night glasses, Strong, will

you," said the inventor; "there's a strange sail ahead."

"It's a schooner, all right, and a fast one, too," said Mr. Lockyer the next instant. Lieutenant Parry and the midshipman soon confirmed this judgment. A great spire of dark canvas was now visible against the night.

"Better bear up on her, Strong," ordered the naval officer; "schooners without lights in these waters are a menace to navigation."

Ned could see the dim outline of this strange craft through the lenses, and at once spun his wheel over and headed for the dark boat.

"Schooner, ahoy!" shouted Lieutenant Parry, as they came within hailing distance; "where are your lights?"

There was no answer, and the swish of the water under her forefoot, and the creak of the straining rigging, as the sailing craft forged along, were the only sounds that broke the stillness.

"Ahoy there, schooner!" came another hail. Then in a sharper voice. "Lie to, there."

For all the rejoinder that came back the schooner might as well have been a ghostly craft manned by phantoms. Only the occasional creak of a block came from her.

"Lay alongside of her, Strong," ordered the officer, in a sharp voice; "it begins to look as if there really were something wrong aboard her."

Ned obeyed instructions, and soon there was not more than ten feet of water between the sailing craft and the submarine.

"Try them again, sir," suggested Mr. Stark.

"Confound them," grunted the officer; "they must be a crew of deaf mutes."

He placed his hands to his mouth funnel-wise and gave another sharp hail.

"Ahoy there, schooner, we want to speak to you."

The answer was as startling as it was unexpected. A sudden red flare cut through the night. Then came the whistle of a bullet, followed by a sharp report.

"Take that, curse you!" came from a man whose head showed for an instant above the schooner's stern rail.

CHAPTER X.

FIGHTING SOUND PIRATES.

"Wow!" cried Herc from the conning-tower; "how the bees hummed."

Luckily this was all the damage the bullet did, though they could hear it strike one of the after plates with a ringing sound. A grim look came over Lieutenant Parry's face.

"See here, my man!" he hailed. "You'd better heave to, and look sharp about it."

"Aw, run along and play," came the derisive answer; "we ain't got time to monkey with you little gasoline fellows."

"They haven't seen yet that we are a submarine," whispered the officer to Mr. Lockyer; "let's have some fun with them. They think we are only some cheeky little launch."

The inventor was nothing averse to giving the rascals a good scare, and accordingly, amid a torrent of profanity from the schooner's rail, the

party that had occupied the deck crawled inside the conning-tower. The manhole was clamped down and everything prepared for a dive. The lieutenant took the wheel, as in case of any accident happening he felt that the responsibility should rest upon him. But he didn't intend any accident to happen if he could help it.

Down shot the submarine obediently, as her forward tanks were filled. She was submerged till she was about ten feet under water, and then run straight ahead on an even keel.

"I guess we are about ready for our surprise party now," announced the lieutenant, who had gauged the distance as accurately as he could. "Strong, you get ready to throw that manhole open when we bob up to the surface; we'll give those fellows a good scare."

Click!

The mechanism to bring the little vessel up was put into operation, and so strongly were the pumps set to work that she bobbed up from the depths like an empty bottle. The schooner had before lain on their starboard hand. Her dark

outlines now showed up to port. They had traveled completely under her.

"Now then, give them a hail!" ordered the officer.

"Schooner, ahoy!"

It was given with all the power of the united lungs of Ned, Herc, old Tom, and Sim.

The occupants of the submarine were almost doubled with laughter at the puzzled, confused uproar that then ensued on board the schooner. Evidently, there were several men on board her.

"There's that pesky launch again," came a voice through the night; "give 'em another shot, Bill."

"Where in blazes are they," was the indignant response, as Bill evidently peered in the direction in which the submarine had last been seen.

"I'm going to run in alongside and board her," whispered the lieutenant, taking advantage of the excitement on board the sailing vessel. "Do you hear, on deck there?"

"Aye, sir," responded Ned; "we're all ready."

"Then look out. Stand by to jump on board

when I give the word. Don't stand for any nonsense. I've an idea those fellows have been up to some mischief. At any rate, a schooner that carries no lights and whose crew open fire on anyone who inquires her business, has only herself to blame if she is held up."

"I'll take the wheel," volunteered Mr. Locker, as they crept closer and closer to the schooner. They were now on the lee side of the craft, and the slight leeway she was making was bringing her down upon them. Her crew, apparently, were all busy looking off to the weather quarter, trying to make out some sign of the launch that had so mysteriously vanished.

"Strictly speaking, I suppose," said the naval officer, as he and Midshipman Stark joined the others on deck, "strictly speaking, I guess we've not much right to board that fellow, but—here goes!"

As he spoke the steel side of the diving vessel grazed the side of the schooner for an instant. Before the others were aware of what he intended to do, Lieutenant Parry had caught at the

sailing vessel's shrouds and swung himself aboard.

At the same instant, by a stroke of ill luck, the wind hauled round, and the awkward schooner yawed off till quite a space separated the submarine from her. Now, it is a curious thing that up to that moment not one of the party had realized that there was not a weapon on board the Lockyer.

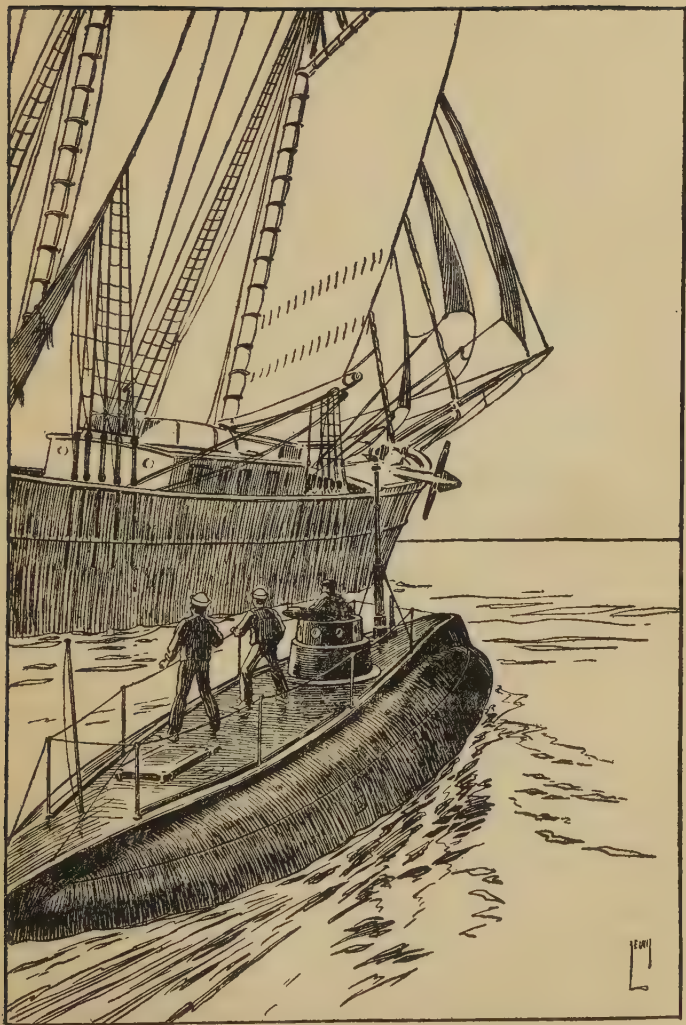
"Not even a bean-shooter," wailed Herc.

"There's a butcher knife in the galley," chortled Ned.

In the excitement, they had forgotten this utterly, and now Lieutenant Parry stood alone on the schooner's deck, unarmed and facing desperate men. True, they could get alongside again in a moment, but if the crew of the schooner was numerous and well armed, it was likely that they might have a tough time in boarding her.

"Bother the luck!" grunted Midshipman Stark; "lay alongside again, will you, Mr. Lockyer. It may not be too late yet."

Noiselessly as before, the submarine crept



Noiselessly as before, the submarine crept through the water, once more nearing the side of the sailing craft.

through the water, once more nearing the side of the sailing craft. But as they hauled closer and closer alongside an unlucky stumble of the beleaguered officer upset a tin baling tub. The unusual noise brought one of the schooner's men to the lee side. Instantly he saw the approaching submarine. Leveling a rifle he carried, he was about to fire at the huddled group on the deck when the lieutenant, springing out from behind a cask where he had been crouching, caught the fellow a blow on the jaw that sent him sprawling backward. Like a flash, the naval officer leaped forward, seized the fellow's weapon, and before any of the schooner's crew realized what had occurred, he had the weapon leveled.

As they came for him in an angry, growling rush his voice rang out hard and sharp as tempered steel.

"Stop where you are. The first man who moves is going to get hurt."

"Consarn it," grumbled one of the men; "whar did you come from?"

"From the bottom of the sea," was the reply,

for the officer could afford to joke just then, having the situation well in hand. How long he could have kept it so is doubtful, for their first surprise over, the schooner's crew, numbering some half-dozen hard-looking characters, began to rally.

"Go on and rush him, boys," snarled the fellow who had been knocked over. "I only had one shot in that rifle, anyhow, and it's ten to one he won't hit anybody."

He kept prudently in the background, however, and none of the others seemed inclined to "bell the cat" at that moment, at any rate. By the time they had made up their minds to commence an attack, the submarine, which had sneaked up swiftly in the excitement, was close alongside. Another instant and four active figures leaped from her decks into the schooner's rigging.

To the officer's surprise, for he was well aware that there were no weapons on board the Lockyer that night, each figure held in its hand a gleaming object, apparently a pistol. They held them leveled at the crew, whose demoralization

was now complete. Some of them beat a retreat into the little cabin astern, among them the fellow who had been at the wheel. Her helm deserted, the little schooner came up into the wind with a great flapping of canvas, fell off again, came up once more, and so on for several minutes.

Two men alone offered any resistance. One of these was the man who had been about to fire at the submarine's crew when he had perceived her hauling alongside. His valor vanished, however, when he saw the gleaming weapons of the attacking party.

"You've got us," he said; "I'll throw up my hands."

"You are a wise man," remarked the officer dryly. "Strong, oblige me by tying up that fellow. Now then, sir, how about you?"

Putting the question in a ferocious voice, the officer whipped round on the other man who had seemed prepared to put up a fight. He was a short, squat man, with a bunch of iron-gray whiskers on his chin. His little eyes glittered

savagely, but he, like his comrade, saw that it was no use to resist.

“Reckon you kin tie me, too,” he said. “You’ve got us dead to rights.”

CHAPTER XI.

CHANNING LOCKYER FILES A MESSAGE.

In the meantime, the other fellow had ~~been~~ looking over the side while Ned tied his hands fast.

"What kind of a launch is that, anyhow?" he asked in wondering tones.

"It's a kind of a special duty launch," parried Ned, not wishing to reveal the true nature of their craft.

"Say, she's a wonder. Up to ~~weather~~ one minute, and the next sneaking up to leeward of a fellow. What chance had we, anyhow. But say, if I'd ever fired at you fellows, there'd have been one less of you."

"I don't doubt it," answered Ned; "but, you see, things came out otherwise."

In the meantime, Midshipman Stark had found that there was a hasp and padlock on the outside of the cabin companionway. He had quickly

snapped the padlock into its fastenings, securing the men who had retreated below. Naturally, a perfect chorus of execrations greeted him as he did this. But equally naturally, they had no effect whatever on the captors of the schooner, who were now more than ever convinced that the men on board her had been up to some nefarious doings.

“Now then, boys,” said the naval officer, when all was secured, and the two tied captives lay in the scuppers, “just lower those sails and heave to a minute, and we’ll see what sort of a craft this is.”

His orders were quickly carried out, and with more alacrity, as everyone was anxious to find out the reason for the strange behavior of the crew of the sailing vessel. If they were honest men their conduct had been unaccountable.

Amidships of the schooner, what was evidently her hatch, was covered with a tarpaulin instead of the customary wooden battens.

“Let’s have that off, boys, and see what’s under there,” ordered the officer. From his station

in the conning-tower Mr. Lockyer was peering over the schooner's bulwarks eagerly. He echoed the cry of surprise given by the others as the cover was ripped off with no gentle hands, but very expeditiously.

"Well, what on earth do you make of that?" gasped the lieutenant, as the contents of the hold lay revealed.

It was furniture. And so far as they could see, costly furniture, too. On the top of the pile of elaborately carved tables and chairs lay a big marble statue, its arms pathetically extended skyward. Poking about in the mass they soon unearthed a piano.

"See here, my men," demanded the lieutenant sharply, turning to one of the bound captives, who had looked on in sullen silence, "what is your explanation of all this?"

"Guess the laugh is on you fellows," was the rejoinder; "we were moving house for a fellow who lived at Setauket, but who wanted to shift his belongings to the mainland."

"And so you sailed at night without lights, and

armed, to repel anyone who asked you questions?" was the sharp rejoinder. "Oh no, my man, that won't do at all."

"Send Sim on board to hold the wheel a minute, will you?" asked Mr. Lockyer suddenly, from the submarine, which was still slowly forging ahead alongside, the tide holding her and the schooner together. "I've got an idea about that furniture," he went on.

"You have?" asked the young officer; "well, come aboard then at once, and bring your solution with you, for I confess it beats me."

Sim dropped over the side and relieved Mr. Lockyer at the wheel, while the inventor clambered on board the schooner. He bent over the pile of furniture projecting from the hold for a few minutes, then stood erect with a triumphant cry.

"I thought so," he exclaimed. "This furniture, every stick of it, so far as I can make out, has been looted from Mr. Pangloss's home. These fellows are the Sound Pirates who robbed him."

"You are sure of this, Lockyer?" asked the

officer; "if it is so we've done a good night's work."

"I am certain of it. I have often visited Mr. Pangloss's home, and I recognize some of this stuff. If further proof were lacking what do you think of this?"

He held up a bust, that even in the starlight, could be seen to be intended for a counterfeit presentment of the "Apostle of Peace," whiskers and all.

"Ho, ho, ho!" exclaimed the officer, bursting into a laugh, in which Mr. Lockyer and the rest presently joined; "yes, that is Mr. Pangloss, beyond a doubt. Now, my men," he said, with a change of manner, switching round on the two bound men, "what have you got to say now?"

"Ain't got nuffin ter say," growled the gray-bearded man sullenly.

"Then I have. Listen. This property is stolen, beyond a doubt. In fact, in my own mind, I have little doubt that you are the notorious band of Sound Pirates, known as the 'Fly By Nights.'

I'm going to head for the nearest town on the mainland and give you over to the police."

"Say, who in blazes are you, anyhow?" asked the gray-bearded man without a quiver in his voice, but with much frank curiosity. "I'd like to know."

"Then, if it will make you tell the truth, I will tell you. We are preservers of law and order wherever infractions of the same occur—and I guess that describes the United States Navy pretty accurately," he whispered, turning to Mr. Lockyer, who nodded.

"Kind of police, eh?"

"Yes. I guess you might call us that," answered Mr. Parry.

"Wall," grunted the gray-bearded man, with great deliberation, "you ain't goin' ter get nawthin' out o' me."

After a brief consultation it was decided to make for Bridgeport and give the fellows from the schooner into custody there. With Mr. Lockyer at the wheel, and the others remaining on board the schooner as a sort of prize crew, the

run into the Connecticut city was made in little more than an hour and a half. As Lieutenant Parry had surmised, the piratical ship's company were proved to be the notorious "Fly By Nights," and when the furniture was examined with care, it was found to be indisputably loot from Mr. Pangloss's home.

When this had been ascertained, and the schooner's crew safely locked up, Mr. Lockyer hastened to a telegraph office, where he sent the following message:

"Mr. Peregrine Pangloss,
No. 14 West Seventy-second Street,
New York.

Have recovered all your stolen furniture with the aid of the Lockyer. Does this go some way toward proving her usefulness?

"CHANNING LOCKYER."

"But the mystery of those weapons has not yet been explained," remarked Lieutenant Parry, as they sat in the cabin on their homeward voyage, discussing the exciting incident of the evening.

To his surprise, Midshipman Stark broke into a laugh, and the buoyant Tom Marlin could not keep from smiling. Ned fumbled in his pocket for a minute, and then produced a brass tap of the ordinary faucet type.

"Here's one of them, sir," he explained, "and the rest were like them."

"That's right, Mr. Parry," chuckled the midshipman; "and it was all Strong's idea. When we became separated from you, we recollected we had no weapons. Strong here had gone below on a search for some. He didn't find any, but in the engine room his eye lit on one of those taps. It struck him at once that, held in the hand, they would resemble a pistol, if one didn't look too close. Out of the storeroom he got enough to arm us all, and that they were very effective, you must admit."

When the laughter over this explanation of the "armed-to-the-teeth" appearance of the boarding party had subsided, Mr. Lockyer spoke.

"I've heard it said," he remarked, "that a leading American characteristic is Bluff. Maybe

that's partly right, but Bluff, mixed with Brains, is sometimes a pretty strong combination."

"It proved so to-night," laughed Mr. Stark.

"Why not call it American strategy?" asked Lieutenant Parry.

They had all joined in a hearty agreement of this characterization when, from Sim, who was at the wheel, there came a sudden hail.

"Below there! Light dead ahead, sir!"

CHAPTER XII.

TECHNICALLY TORPEDOED!

"Light ahead?" echoed the officer, springing to his feet. The others followed his example. Up the steel ladder sprang Lieutenant Parry, followed by the rest. Curious faces poked out of the engine room to ascertain the cause of this sudden exodus.

Up in the conning-tower it was easy enough to see the light that had attracted Sim's attention. It was an immensely bright light, high up. Below it were two sailing lights, red and green.

"Jove!" exclaimed Lieutenant Parry, "that's a navy craft. See that large, intensely bright masthead light? That's the night insignia of one of Uncle Sam's ships."

"Let's give her a hail, sir," suggested Midshipman Stark; "in a way, we, too, are a naval craft now."

"Wonder what ship she is?" mused Lieutenant

Parry, paying no attention to this suggestion. "I have it," he exclaimed the next minute. "It's the gunboat Brooklyn. I recollect she was ordered to Boston last week. She's going up through the Sound."

Midshipman Stark repeated his suggestion.

"That's a good idea, Stark," said the officer; "her commander, Lieutenant-Commander Scott, is an old friend of mine. Wouldn't he be astonished to know that we were so close to him! Why, in time of war, if his was a hostile ship, all we would have to do would be to dive, and then torpedo him."

"I believe we could even creep up and board him without his noticing us," put in Mr. Lockyer, gazing at the bright light which was now almost abeam of them.

"By George! Do you really think so, Lockyer? Wouldn't that be a prime joke? But how could we do it?"

Nobody had any suggestions to make till Ned spoke up.

"I think I could suggest a way, sir," he said quietly.

"Let's hear it, Strong," eagerly exclaimed the officer. "If we could carry such a thing out it would be a good joke in navy circles for a long time to come."

"All the apparatus it would need, sir, would be some line and a heavy weight."

"A sounding lead?" asked Mr. Lockyer.

"Yes, sir. Have you any on board?" asked Ned.

"Several, and plenty of line, too. But now let's hear your plan."

They eagerly listened while Ned detailed his scheme to give Lieutenant-Commander Scott an unexpected visit in mid-Sound. As he unfolded it, his hearers grew more and more enthusiastic.

"Splendid. We'll do it if you are agreeable, Mr. Lockyer," said the officer.

"Anything that will test the capabilities of the Lockyer boat I am agreeable to—nay, anxious to see tried," was the rejoinder.

"Very well, then. Now, lad"—to Sim, who

was steering—"ring for full speed and get us ahead of that gunboat. Better run with the turret awash, so that she won't see us if they should take a sudden fancy to have some searchlight practice."

A perceptible increase in the speed came almost immediately following the signal. At the same time, the machinery for submerging the craft was put in operation, till the conning-tower was almost completely under water. The clamps were tightly screwed, so that in case it became necessary to make a sudden dive it could be done instantly.

A perfect knowledge of the gunboat's whereabouts were had, even under water, by use of the periscope. This necessary part of every submarine's equipment is a simple variation on the old camera obscura. A long tube, with a mirror at the top, projected above the surface of the water. It offers no more target than would the slender neck of a floating bottle, and would hardly attract any attention. Inside the tube are other mirrors, so arranged as to reflect a perfect

picture of the waters above, upon a flat, white surface—something like the top of a desk—set in front of the helmsman in the conning-tower.

Of course, as it was at night, all that could be seen in the periscope reflector was the bright light on the gunboat's masthead, but this served quite as well to locate her as if it had been daytime, and they could have seen the reflection of her whole outline.

They speedily drew ahead of the gunboat, which was not, apparently, making more than ten or twelve knots. Forging steadily forward, the submarine was maneuvered till she was directly across the gunboat's bows, but some distance ahead.

"Is this about far enough, Strong, do you think?" asked Lieutenant Parry.

"I think so, sir," nodded Ned gravely, "and now, if you think everything is ready for it, we'll give them a whistle."

"Go ahead," nodded the officer.

Ned seized the compressed-air whistle's lever and sent an eerie scream out over the waters. As

its echoes died out they could see a sudden ray of light shoot upward from the dark form of the gunboat, as reflected in the periscope.

"They've heard the whistle, and are wondering what it is. There goes the searchlight!" cried Lieutenant Parry, as the fan-shaped ray hovered about for an instant, and then began to sweep the waters. Dive quick, before they pick us up."

Ned sprang to the wheel and jerked over the sinking controls. Instantly the little of the submarine that showed above the surface was completely submerged.

"How much does she draw, sir?" asked Ned, turning to the officer.

"About fifteen feet, I guess," was the rejoinder.

"Then I'll sink to twenty-five, sir, and come up as near astern as I can."

Down they dropped, till the gauge showed that they were twenty-four feet under the surface. Ned brought the craft on an even keel, and then began the ascent. As they rose to the surface, every one in the conning-tower gave a cry of surprise. So accurately had the Dreadnought

Boy gauged the distance that the Lockyer came to the top not more than ten feet astern of the gunboat. They could see her big counter looming up blackly against the starry sky.

Forward, the searchlight was sweeping the waters in every direction. Evidently, that sudden whistle from dead ahead had got on the nerves of those in charge of her navigation.

"My, but they must be a sadly puzzled crew on board the Brooklyn," chuckled Lieutenant Parry.

The others were scarcely less amused at the way in which the larger vessel was helplessly sweeping the waters in search of the mysterious cause of the alarm.

"I saw a bear once, back in the Catskills, that had been stung by a bee," whispered Herc; "the way that old gunboat is carrying on reminds me of it."

"Will there be any one astern, sir?" asked Ned of Lieutenant Parry, the next minute.

"Should be a marine sentry by the illuminating buoy, but I guess they're all forward, trying to find out if they've run down anything," whis-

pered back the lieutenant; "but we've got to act quickly if we are to act at all."

"Very well, then, sir," rejoined the young boatswain's mate, throwing back the conning-tower top without making the slightest noise. "Mr. Lockyer, will you hand me up that line, sir, and one of the weights?"

The inventor passed up to the lad a coil of stout, half-inch rope, to the end of which Ned rapidly attached one of the heavy sounding leads.

"Now then, sir, if we can creep up under her counter, I can do the trick," he whispered, when this had been done.

Silently, the little sea-tiger crept in under the shadow of the gunboat's overhanging stern. Ned took good aim, and holding a coil of the rope in one hand—like a cowboy about to throw a lariat—he hurled the lead upward. It swished round the gunboat's stern jackstaff, in which a boxed stern-light was burning, and fell on the other side, having carried the rope to which it was attached round the staff.

For an instant they held their breath. From forward there came a sudden tinkling sound.

"Ding-ding, ding-ding!"

"Fow-er bells, and all's well!" came the cry from the bow, ringing weirdly out on the still air.

"Wait a jiffy," breathed Lieutenant Parry. For an instant they waited in suspense. Then came an answering cry from the stern.

"All's well."

"Good. That sentry was off his post, as I thought, while we were creeping up," whispered the officer; "now then, Strong, are you ready?"

"As soon as I've made the end of the rope fast, sir," was the reply, as Ned rapidly took a half-stitch with the loose end about a cleat on the deck. This done, he made fast the other end to another cleat on the side of the conning-tower. The submarine was now practically in tow of the Brooklyn, the looped rope about the jackstaff holding the two vessels together.

Ned slipped off his shoes, and then cast his coat back into the conning-tower. In the mean-

time, Lieutenant Parry had stooped low, and tearing a page out of his note-book, had rapidly written something in the light from the periscope binnacle.

He folded the paper and handed it to Ned.

"Good luck!" he whispered, thrusting it into the lad's hand.

"Thank you, sir," rejoined Ned briefly.

Then, with the note thrust into his shirt, he ran forward, and began clambering up the ropes. It was no trick at all for the nimble, hard-muscled lad to gain the afterdeck of the gunboat. His progress was eagerly watched until the curve of the counter shut him out from view.

"Oh, but won't there be fireworks in a while," chortled Midshipman Stark, doubling up with mirth.

"Hush, Stark," admonished the lieutenant. "Listen!"

From above there came the sharp ring of a musket butt, and then an astonished hail.

"Halt! Who goes there?"

"That's the sentry. Strong's on deck all

right," whispered Lieutenant Parry. Then, in Ned's voice, there came from above:

"A messenger from the deep sea. I have a message for Lieutenant-Commander Scott."

"The explosion is due in about five minutes, Lockyer," chuckled the naval officer blithely. "Oh, won't Scott be in a fury,—and he always declared that submarines were useless in practical warfare."

CHAPTER XIII.

A MESSENGER FROM THE DEEP.

"A messenger from where?" gasped the sentry, as Ned, barefooted and coatless, stood before him with the paper in hand.

"From the deep sea," responded the Dreadnought Boy, with perfect gravity. "Will you have the goodness to have this note conveyed to Lieutenant-Commander Scott?"

"You be blowed!" rejoined the sentry, now over his first alarm, in which he had conceived Ned to be some sort of sea sprite. "You're nothing but a blooming sto'away."

"Oh no," Ned assured him with unmoved gravity; "see, here's the note. I'd advise you to have it sent forward without delay if you mean to avoid trouble."

Something in the boy's manner impressed the marine, and stepping forward, he took the note and scrutinized it carefully.

"This beats me," he muttered. "See here, young fellow, you'd better come with me. I'll report this to the officer of the watch."

Ned marched forward with the sentry in a perfectly docile way. Presently they came upon the officer of the watch. He gazed at the sentry and his companion with unmixed amazement.

"Who in blue blazes is this?" he demanded, gazing at Ned.

"Dunno, sir," was the sentry's prompt rejoinder. "He says he's a messenger from the deep sea, sir. It's a fact that he did climb over the starn. I think—begging your pardon, sir—that he's a bit off in the head."

"That will do, my man. Go aft."

"Not before he's delivered my note, sir, please," requested Ned.

"What? This—this boy brought a note with him?" demanded the amazed officer.

"Yes, sir," rejoined the sentry; "here it is, sir. It seems all addressed regular."

As the officer took it, Ned struck in once more.

"Will you see that the note reaches Lieutenant-Commander Scott at once, sir?"

"Why, I——" began the puzzled officer; "see here, young man, has this note anything to do with that whistle that sounded right under our bows a few minutes ago?"

"I think so, sir," responded Ned gravely, while the curious watch clustered about him. The thoroughly mystified officer glanced upward. He saw and hailed a passing orderly, and gave the note into his charge, to be conveyed at once to the commander of the Brooklyn.

"See here, young man," he said blusteringly, this done, "don't try to temporize with me—how did you come on board this vessel?"

"I think that note explains that, sir," responded Ned quietly, but with adamant firmness.

His coolness incensed the puzzled officer.

"What the dickens do you mean by your impudence, young man," he fumed; "are you aware that this is the United States gunboat Brooklyn?"

"Perfectly, sir. That's why I boarded her," rejoined Ned.

"But—but, look here, you can't impose on me, you know. You're a stowaway. That's what you are. Come, out with the truth now."

"I never set foot on this craft till five minutes ago, sir," rejoined Ned, with perfect truth.

"Nonsense. Either you are insane or a wilful impostor. I warn you, sir, you are playing a dangerous game. This is a Government vessel, and——"

At this moment the irate officer was interrupted by a voice from the bridge. Lieutenant-Commander Scott, in a hastily-assumed bath robe, stood outside his stateroom door.

"What is all this nonsense, Dacre?" he demanded sharply.

"Just what I'm trying to find out, sir," replied the officer of the deck. "Sorry to have awakened you, sir, but the affair was so mystifying that I thought it ought to be brought to your attention."

"But—wait a moment, and I'll be down there," exploded the chagrined skipper, running down a couple of ladders and reaching the main deck, where Ned stood surrounded by the watch.

"This note says," fumed Lieutenant-Commander Scott, "that a submarine is fast to my stern. Listen:

"Submarine Lockyer is fast to your stern. You are technically out of commission.—Parry, Lieutenant U. S. N.' "

"Why, there is a Lieutenant Parry in the Navy, who is attached to submarine work, sir," stammered the officer of the deck, more mystified than ever. "Of course. He is an old friend of mine. Where is the fellow who brought this note?"

"Here, sir!" exclaimed Ned, clicking his bare heels together, and coming to an attitude of attention.

"What is the explanation of this?" demanded the commander of the Brooklyn. "How dare you have the impudence to forge Lieutenant Parry's name? What does all this mean?"

"Perhaps you had better ask Lieutenant Parry, sir," replied Ned quietly.

"Why—what—how? Where is he?"

"Right under the counter of your ship, sir.

Or, at least, I left him there," was the staggering rejoinder, delivered in a quiet tone.

"Young man, if you are imposing upon us, this will be a sorry night's work for you," was the ominous response, delivered in a meaning tone, as followed by the deck officer, with the marine sentry and the rest of the watch trailing at a respectful distance, Lieutenant-Commander Scott made his way to the stern.

"Great guns and little fishes!" he exclaimed, as he peered over the sternrail, "you were right, boy. But—how in the name of time——?"

"Ahoy there, Scott, that you?" came up from the conning-tower of the submarine, as she rode along in the stern of the gunboat, dancing about in the wash of the big boat's propeller like a cork.

"Aye, aye, Parry," was the rejoinder. "This is a fine joke you've played on me. You'll make me the laughing stock of every mess and service club from here to Yokohama."

"Sorry, old man," was the cheerful reply,—somehow there didn't seem to be much sorrow

in the tones,—“but it was in the line of duty, you know.”

“Line of duty be hanged, Parry. But I’m willing to admit it was a brilliant idea.”

“Oh, it wasn’t mine. You’ll have to give the credit for it to Bos’un’s Mate Strong, who, at this minute, is standing beside you.”

“Oh, so you are Strong,” said Lieutenant-Commander Scott, turning to the lad beside him with keen interest expressed in look and voice. “I’ve heard of you before, and your shipmate Taylor. The Dreadnought Boys, they call you, don’t they? Well, young man, I have to admit that you have caught us napping. But such jokes are dangerous things to play.”

“Especially if the joke had taken place in time of war,” chuckled Lieutenant Parry. “Come, come, Scott, don’t be grouchy just because you have been fairly torpedoed. If there is any blame, it is attached to me, but when Strong suggested the prank, I could not help but think that if we could make fast to you without your knowing it, that such a feat would go pretty far

toward proving the value and efficiency of the Lockyer submarine in war-time."

Somewhat mollified, Lieutenant-Commander Scott replied in kind and, after some more talk, chiefly of a jesting character, Ned dropped over the stern, and the lines which held the Lockyer fast to the Brooklyn were cast off.

"I wouldn't care to be in that sentry's place," laughed Lieutenant Parry, as the bright mast-light of the Brooklyn grew dim in the distance. "Scott always was a stickler for discipline, even at Annapolis, and he has always maintained that no ship he was in command of would ever be surprised by anything afloat. So you see, Strong, that you have been responsible for what is bound to become the biggest naval joke of a decade."

"And now," struck in Mr. Lockyer, "I think that it would be a good idea to head back to our home port and let all hands indulge in a good, long sleep. That is," he added, "if no more adventures happen to us on this eventful night."

The Lockyer, however, was not destined to have any more stirring adventures for the pres-

ent, and two hours later she dropped anchor off the boatyard, with a highly successful trial trip to her credit. Channing Lockyer's dreams that night were rosier than they had been for many a moon. And in and out of the fabric of them floated a face, the face of the girl who had broken the bottle over the bows of the gallant little diving boat—the daughter of the white-whiskered apostle of universal peace.

Possibly, however, if the occupants of the submarine had possessed the gift of what the Scotch call "back sight," they might not have slumbered so peacefully. Had they had this faculty, they would have been able to take in the details of a scene that occurred at their moorings a short time after they had slipped them for the exciting test voyage.

Hardly had the Lockyer's nose poked itself outside the harbor before a long, narrow, low-lying motor-boat glided across the waters. On board her were two men. One of them held a pair of powerful night glasses in his hand. Raising them, as the craft neared the spot in which the

submarine had been moored, he scrutinized the surroundings carefully.

An exclamation of disappointment left his lips as he perceived that there was no sign of the submarine at her anchorage.

"She's gone!" he exclaimed angrily. "I thought you said, Anderson, that she was anchored right off here after the launching?"

"And so she was," rejoined the late foreman of the Lockyer boatyard; "didn't I see her with my own eyes? I was in among the crowd, and elbowed right and left, it's true, but still I know what I'm about, Tom Gradbarr. I guess that Lockyer has stolen a march on us and sneaked out to sea on a trial trip."

"That's the way it looks," was the rejoinder. "Well, perhaps it's all for the best. They would have kept a pretty strict watch to-night, anyhow. It's bound to be some time before the navy finally accepts her. I know the way they do things at Washington. We are bound to find another chance to carry out orders."

"That being the case, let's get back to the

island," suggested Anderson, who, had it been light, would have been seen to be as pale as ashes. Something like a sigh of relief had, in fact, escaped his lips when he saw that the Lockyer was not at her expected moorings as they had thought.

"Yes. I guess we had better turn back," said the other. He gave the "automobile control" wheel, by which the motor craft was guided, a twist, and she spun round like a long, lithe snake. "We've got to get back and put Ferriss and Camberly ashore, anyhow."

"They'll be mad as hornets when they hear that we've done nothing," came from Anderson, as the boat gathered way.

"Can't be helped," was the gruff rejoinder. "Jobs like the one they've set us can't be done in the wink of an eye."

"That's right," replied Anderson; "but waiting to get even is a tiresome job."

"Yes, but vengeance is all the sweeter for being bottled a while," chuckled Tom Gradbarr, as he sent the boat spinning through the water in the

direction from which she had come. This lay up a channel, stretching east and west inside the narrow sand spit, which separated the calm waters of Grayport Harbor from the open Sound.

The inlet reached for several miles up the coast, terminating in a shallow bay dotted with small, barren islands. In the summer there was a bungalow colony here, but at this time of year it was deserted. As they reached the islands and began threading their way among them, a blue light suddenly was seen waving through the darkness.

"There's Ferriss now," exclaimed Gradbarr, setting his course for the signal. "I'll bet he's wondering if we have a passenger on board."

CHAPTER XIV.

A "BIG LEAGUE" REPORTER.

The next morning nobody was astir on the submarine till long after the sun had risen and was shining brightly down on the sparkling waters of Sound and harbor. When Ned and Herc climbed out of the conning tower for a look about them, the beach about the yard, however, was already dotted with curious sight-seers, some of them armed with field glasses, the better to see what was going forward on the submarine.

The launching of the Lockyer had furnished the biggest excitement that Grayport had known for a long time. The early train had brought into town several staff correspondents from New York evening papers, the local men at Grayport having all telegraphed in "stories" the night before.

As Ned and Herc stood gazing shoreward, they saw a gasoline launch, which plied for hire,

put out from one of the wharves. Several passengers could be seen on board her, some of whom carried square black boxes and other paraphernalia.

"Good gracious," laughed Ned, "here comes the first enemy we have encountered since we have been in commission."

"Who is that?" inquired Herc, not unnaturally puzzled by Ned's remark.

"The reporters and photographers from the New York papers," laughed Ned. "Look yonder, there's a whole boatload of them on their way out."

"Thunder and turtles, and I forgot to part my auburn hair!" gasped Herc, hastily diving below. He was followed more leisurely by Ned. By this time the rest of the party was up and about, and in the galley Tom Merlin was setting about his preparations for breakfast, aided by Sim, who had been pressed into service as "first deputy assistant cook and bottle washer in ordinary," as Tom described it.

"How about letting the reporters on board?"

asked Lieutenant Parry, as soon as Ned had apprised him of the imminent invasion of the boarding party from shore.

"Of course, it will be impossible to allow them the run of the craft," rejoined Mr. Lockyer. "I think, however, that we can extend them all the courtesies in our power, provided, of course, that it will not conflict with the navy regulations."

"I don't think that it will do any harm to let them have a few pictures of the boat from the outside, and a general description," was the reply. "I'm pretty sure that if we ask them not to mention certain things about the boat, they won't. Reporters are a mighty decent class of fellows, as a rule, and if they promise you not to do a thing, they won't break their words. Besides, it would be too bad if they had all this trip down here for nothing."

So it was arranged that the press was to be allowed a view of the outside of the boat and to be permitted to snapshot her exterior to their heart's content. But the interior of the novel craft and

her wonderful machinery and devices were, as yet, to remain a sealed book to the public.

"Good morning, gentlemen, can we come aboard?" hailed a tall, young fellow in the bow of the press boat, as she drew alongside and her occupants shot keen, interested glances at the odd-looking craft.

"By all means," was the rejoinder from the inventor, who, with Lieutenant Parry, Midshipman Stark, and the others, now stood on the deck; "but before you set foot on board I want you to promise not to pry into anything that we ask you not to, nor to print anything but the facts we will tell you."

"All right, sir; we'll promise," came back from another reporter. "I suppose you'll show us all over the craft?"

"From stem to stern?" put in a nautically inclined pressman.

"I'm afraid not," rejoined the inventor, with a smile, as the eager horde hung on his words. "You see, there are several secrets about the boat that we can't give out to the public, as yet."

"We'll have to be content with what we can get, then," was the rejoinder. "But can our photographers get a snap of you gentlemen as you stand on deck?"

"Go ahead," laughed Lieutenant Parry, with the air of a man resigned to the inevitable.

Click! Click! Click!

A perfect fusillade of photographic shutters snapped, and then the photographers begged for "just one more." With great good nature this was given, the submarine party grouping themselves as directed. While this was going on, the shore boat had run in quite close to the submarine and, unnoticed in the excitement, a man had jumped from her upon the steel deck of the diving craft. He was a stout, flashy man, of middle age, who, despite his weight, had displayed this alertness. His eyes, which were keen and shifty, glanced about him eagerly, as he set foot on the Lockyer's deck.

For a minute he was not noticed, but presently the inventor spied him.

"I'm sorry," he said, stepping up to him, "but

I shall have to ask you gentlemen to come on board in a party or not at all. You will understand me when I say that we wish to keep you under our eyes."

He spoke with a laugh that removed any of the sting the words might otherwise have had.

A chorus of:

"That's all right, sir." "We're agreeable," and so on, greeted his words.

"That being the case, I shall have to ask you to step back into the press boat," said Mr. Lockyer firmly to the fleshy man, who showed no disposition to move.

"And who are you, may I ask?" shot out the intruder in an offensive tone.

"My name is Channing Lockyer. I'm the owner and builder of this boat," was the quiet reply.

"Oh, you are, are you," rejoined the other, with a harsh laugh. "Well, when do you expect to submerge her?"

"I can't answer that question," replied the in-

ventor good-naturedly. "That is one of the things I warned you gentlemen about asking."

"Seems to me you're pretty well stuck up for a poverty-stricken inventor with a gim-crack boat," returned the other, coolly drawing out a cigar and lighting it with an easy manner, but betraying not the slightest haste to leave the boat.

By this time the attention of the other reporters had been drawn to this argument and their voices began to rise in protest at the stout man's behavior.

"Say, cut it out there, will you?"

"Why don't you do as we agreed to?"

"Yes, do what Mr. Lockyer says."

"That fellow must think he's a big league reporter," muttered Herc savagely.

Sullenly the fleshy man obeyed the chorus of protest and withdrew, stepping back on board the press boat.

"Say, who is that fellow," whispered one of the reporters to another. "Ever see him before?"

"No, I never did," was the answer. "I'll ask Brown."

But Brown had never seen the stranger, either. Nor, it transpired, had any of the other reporters, all of whom were known to each other.

"Better ask him his name," suggested Brown. "He's pretty fresh and may offend these submarine fellows."

"No, leave him alone. He may be some magazine chap," put in another. "There's no knowing how they'll behave. They think they own the earth."

And so the fleshy, offensive stranger boarded the craft with the rest when the time came, without being questioned. While Lieutenant Parry and Midshipman Stark were showing the rest of the newspaper men about the deck and explaining such harmless things as the periscope and the torpedo tubes to them, this stranger sought out Channing Lockyer.

"I guess I owe you an apology Mr. Lockyer," he said, "for my brusqueness. I'm sorry. Will you accept my apology?"

"Of course, of course," said Mr. Lockyer pleasantly enough, but turning away. Somehow he felt an instinctive repulsion to this person.

But the fleshy man pressed after him.

"Have a cigar, won't you?" he urged, drawing out a case of the weeds.

"Thank you, I don't smoke," was the rejoinder.

"Is that so," remarked the other; "well, you don't know what you're missing. But while the others are nosing about, I've got a bit of information that may interest you, Mr. Lockyer. Do you know a man named Gradbarr?"

The inventor, who had been trying to think of some excuse to get away from the fleshy man, became interested at once.

"Yes," he rejoined, "I do. What of him?"

"He is a rascal, I gather," went on the other coolly. "I assume this both from your manner of speaking of him and from a conversation I had with him myself this morning."

"You had a conversation with him?" gasped Mr. Lockyer, genuinely interested now.

"Where?"

"Right here in Grayport," was the response.

"But I thought he had left town."

"That's where you are wrong. He is living in some well-concealed place on the outskirts of the town, or so I gathered. But that is not the point. What I wanted to tell you was that he came to me this morning and, after some beating about the bush, requested me to furnish him with some detailed drawings of what I saw on the completed submarine, and also with any other information concerning her I could gather."

"Did he say what he wanted this for?" asked Mr. Lockyer, in great astonishment.

"No. But, as he offered me a big price for the information, I gathered he was in the employ of persons who are interested in obtaining the information."

"And did you make an appointment with him?" asked Mr. Lockyer, with keen interest.

"You appear anxious to know if I did or not," parried the other. "May I ask why, outside, of course, of your natural interest in learning if I acceded to his wishes?"

"Why," burst out the inventor, whose strong point was not worldly wisdom, "if I knew where he was I'd have the scoundrel arrested. He attempted to destroy my craft before she was launched, and—but never mind that. I would feel deeply grateful to you, however, if you could tell me where I could lay my hands on him."

"I don't know myself," replied the other, "but I tell you what, Mr. Lockyer, I won't be going back to the city to-night. Suppose this afternoon I try to get track of him. If I succeed I'll make an appointment with you this evening, and we'll get the local police and run him down."

"The very thing!" exclaimed the inventor warmly. "I really don't know how to thank you, Mr.—Mr.——"

"Armstrong—James Armstrong, of the United Magazines Association," was the glib reply. "Mind you, I don't know if I will be able to succeed in finding the man again, but if I do, be assured I'll let you know."

"Thank you, Mr. Armstrong," warmly replied the inventor. "It's very good of you."

"Not at all, not at all," was the hasty response. "In this case, as the copy-books used to say, 'Virtue is its own reward.' "

With this he strolled off and mingled with the other news-getters.

"Now just see how one can be mistaken in a man," thought the inventor to himself. "I had quite a prejudice against that fellow, and yet it turns out that he may be able to do me a good turn, after all. I'd give a lot to get my hands on Gradbarr, for, since I have been thinking it over, it seems to me that there was more behind that gas explosion than appeared on the surface. And then coupling his attempt to destroy the Lockyer with the previous attempt, it looks very much as if he were the agent for somebody else. Somebody powerful and wealthy, who wishes to harm me—those Atlas people, like as not, though I hate to suspect anybody of such dirty work. If he can be arrested, we may solve the mystery and at the same time put a rascal where he belongs."

At this point of his meditations, the inventor

was besieged by requests for an interview. But he was firm on that point.

“Write all you like about what you have seen of the boat, gentlemen,” he said, “but please leave me out of it.”

“We can’t very well do that, Mr. Lockyer, since she is your creation,” said a reporter. “But we’ll let you down as easy as we can.”

“Thanks. The less said about me, the better,” was the reply.

Soon after the reporters left, having warmly thanked the submarine party for their courtesies. Thanks to Lieutenant Parry and Midshipman Stark, they had obtained good stories, with just enough of a dash of mystery in them to make them all the better reading. As Mr. Armstrong went over the side, he took occasion to speak to Mr. Lockyer in a low voice.

“I must ask you to keep quiet about this,” he said. “It would get me in a lot of trouble with the paper if they knew I was spending my time in any one else’s interests. But I like you, and I

don't want to see such a rascal as Gradbarr get off scot free."

The inventor could only thank this disinterested benefactor once more. That afternoon, while work was actively going on on board the submarine—for after her trial trip there was quite a lot of overhauling and setting to rights to be done—a boat from the shore came alongside. Ned was on deck at the time and answered the heavily-bearded oarsman's hail.

"Note for Mr. Lockyer," said the boatman, coming alongside and handing Ned a missive. "From the gent at the hotel," he added, "and will you ask Mr. Lockyer what time I'm to come off for him?"

Ned hastened below and handed the note to the inventor. He took it and scanned the missive eagerly. It was from Armstrong, and read:

"Know where Gradbarr can be found. Meet me ashore at the old Banta House at eight p. m. Police will be there. Yours for justice, Armstrong."

The inventor hastily scribbled an answer in re-

ply and handed it to Ned. The Dreadnought Boy hastened back on deck with it and found the bearded boatman resting easily on his oars, idly regarding the submarine's structure.

"Here's the answer," said Ned, handing the note to him.

"Is he going to come?" asked the man, with a sudden flash of eagerness. The next instant, at Ned's start of surprise, he checked himself, evidently realizing he had made a mistake.

"I mean what time am I to come for him?" he asked.

"How do I know," rejoined Ned, but Mr. Lockyer, who had come on deck unnoticed, answered for him.

"Be here at seven-thirty, my man," he said. "By the way, how far is it to the Banta House?"

"Why," exclaimed Ned, in some surprise, "the Banta House is that old hotel away up the beach. They built it for a big summer resort, but it never paid. Too lonesome, I guess. Herc and I walked out there one day to see it. It's a curious sight

to see that fine building all going to rack and ruin in the woods."

The bearded man in the boat had been eyeing Ned with great disfavor while he volunteered these details, and he now struck in in a gruff voice.

"It ain't so lonesome," he said. "I've bin there many a time. I'll be here for you at seven-thirty, then, sir?"

"Yes, my man," said Mr. Lockyer. As the boat was rowed off, the inventor turned to Ned.

"Then you think the Banta House is a queer place for a man to make an appointment?"

"Unless it's on some secret sort of business, sir, I do," answered Ned frankly. "If I were going to meet any one there, I'd want to know what kind of folks they were."

"Well, as you may have gathered, I have an appointment there this evening myself," rejoined the inventor. "I'm not at liberty to tell what it is, but it may have very important results."

Ned nodded. But his thoughts were elsewhere. Something about the heavily bearded

man in the boat seemed familiar to him. He had met him or seen him before, he was certain. But where? He could not think. A short time later he drew Herc off in a corner and described the man fully to him, imitating his manner as well as he could, but Herc could come no nearer to placing him than could Ned.

CHAPTER XV.

SOME RASCALS AT WORK.

At seven-thirty that evening the boat was there, and Mr. Lockyer immediately got on board. Lieutenant Parry and Midshipman Stark had already gone ashore to visit some friends of the officers, who lived not far off. Andy Bowler and some of the engine-room crew alone remained on board beside the boys.

"Take good care of the Lockyer, Strong," laughed the inventor, as he took his seat in the stern sheets of the little shore boat.

"Aye, aye, sir," Ned assured him, "and you take good care of yourself, sir, for the Lockyer wouldn't be much good without you."

As he said this, Ned could have sworn that a half smile, which he immediately hastened to conceal, flitted across the visage of the bearded man at the oars.

"Oh, I'll take good care of myself, Ned," Mr.

Lockyer said lightly, as the oars of the boatman began to dip and the little craft moved off. Before long it was almost out of sight, but still Ned watched it through the fast-gathering dusk.

As he gazed he mused on the strange errand that had called the inventor ashore to the lonely Banta House. A more isolated place it would be hard to think of.

"It's queer," mused the boy, "mighty queer. If it wasn't that Gradbarr—— Wow!"

He jumped suddenly erect from the conning tower rail against which he had been leaning, and, rushing up to Herc, who stood near by, he seized him by the neck and shook him violently.

"Wake up, Herc, you red-headed dreamer!" he exclaimed excitedly. "Wake up, and listen to something!"

"I will if you take that hand off the back of my neck," retorted Herc. "It interferes with my hearing seriously."

"Oh, don't try to be funny. Listen. I've just thought who that bearded boatman reminded me of——"

"Adam's off ox?" drawled Herc easily.

"No, you chump—Gradbarr."

"Gradbarr! You're crazy."

"I'm certain it was he. That beard was a disguise. This looks as if it might be one of his tricks. If it is, Mr. Lockyer's in about as bad a fix as he can be."

Herc was fairly alive now. He literally crackled with animation.

"Let's get after them and make sure," he urged. "If it is Gradbarr, or any one like him, we ought to warn Mr. Lockyer at once."

"Of course," said Ned impatiently; "but how _____"

"How? Row after them, of course."

"A fine idea, Herc, but submarine's don't carry boats."

"Turbines and tamborines, that's so. Then what in the name of the big bow gun are we going to do?"

But Ned had no answer. If things were as he feared, they were as powerless to aid Mr. Lockyer as if they had been on another planet.

"Are we nearing the hotel now?" asked Mr. Lockyer, as the bearded man, after an hour's rowing, still bent to his oars.

"She's right off thar among them trees," was the rejoinder. The boatman jerked his thumb over his shoulder and indicated a dark grove of sombre evergreens along the shore. They stood out blackly against the night sky.

Some distance behind them twinkled the lights of Grayport, but between the dark clump of trees and the village there were no cheerful lights to mark human habitations. As Ned had said, it was an isolated place, indeed.

"I half wish I had investigated this man Armstrong a little more before I set off on this mission," thought Mr. Lockyer, "or, at least, that I had brought some one with me. What if this should be a trap to rob me or to—oh, pshaw! I'm getting nervous. Of course, Gradbarr, if he is in the neighborhood, would not be residing in the center of a village. Then the police will be there, too."

Before long the boatman ran the little craft

alongside a mouldering wharf, once intended as the pier of the abandoned hotel. Making fast the painter, he gruffly directed the inventor to step ashore.

"Mr. Armstrong will be waiting at the end of the wharf," he said.

Channing Lockyer's steps rang out hollowly on the deserted wharf as he stepped shoreward toward the sombre grove of melancholy trees, among which he could now make out the outlines of the hotel, a huge barn-like edifice pierced with many dark windows. The wind sighed in a weird way through the grove as he approached. He had now reached the end of the wharf and still no sign of Armstrong was apparent.

"I'll ask the boatman where he was to be," thought Mr. Lockyer.

He was turning with this intention when, from the shoreward end of the pier, three dark figures stepped out of the shadows.

"Ah, Mr. Armstrong," greeted the inventor, recognizing one of them; "here you are, I see. I was getting quite nervous. A lonely place this. Is

the chief of police here with you. I—Jasper Ferriss!”

“Yes, Jasper Ferriss,” responded one of the figures, whose faces had hitherto been too much in the shadow to be recognizable. “I want to talk with you, Lockyer.”

“I have nothing to say to you, sir,” rejoined the inventor. “If this whole thing was a trick to get me to meet you, we may as well end the interview now.”

He turned on his heel and faced the boatman, who had been standing behind him.

“Row me back to the Lockyer at once,” he ordered indignantly.

“Not till I gets my orders,” grinned the boatman insolently. “I’ve got a few scores to settle with you, Channing Lockyer, on my own account.”

The voice was no longer disguised now, and Lockyer, after an instant’s struggle with his recollection, recalled where he heard it before.

“Why you—you are Gradbarr!” he exclaimed.

“That’s me,” rejoined the other, “and now I

might as well get this hair mattress off my face. It's half smothering me."

With a sweep of his hand, he removed the heavy beard, revealing the sinister features of the former employee of the Lockyer yard.

"You see, you are in our power absolutely, Lockyer," said Ferriss, suavely enough, but with a meaning inflection underlying his words. "Now what do you say to having a little confab about the boat?"

"That I would not treat with you for her if I were starving and you the only bidder," was the indignant reply. "Let me pass please, Ferriss. I'll walk back to the village."

"Not yet, Lockyer," rejoined Ferriss. "We really can't let you go yet." He held up a deprecating hand.

"What, you'd stop me? In that case, I'll have to insist. I did not come unarmed."

As he spoke, Mr. Lockyer drew a pistol from his coat pocket, and leveled it.

"Let me pass, Ferriss," he said, in a determined voice.

But instead of replying, the other gave an imperceptible signal by drawing out his handkerchief. As he did so, Gradbarr, who had been standing behind the inventor, gave a quick step forward. His hand was raised. As Channing Lockyer's finger pressed the trigger in his determination to force a path if necessary, Gradbarr's arm descended.

There was a dull sound as the sand bag he wielded struck the inventor between the shoulders.

With a little choking cry, Channing Lockyer pitched forward, but, as he did so, the pistol exploded, its report echoing hollowly against the dreary walls of the abandoned hotel.

"Confound it! Suppose some one heard that?" growled the man, whom Channing Lockyer knew as Armstrong.

"No danger of that, Watson Camberly, my boy," chuckled Ferriss, gazing at the senseless form stretched at his feet. "Here, Anderson and you, Gradbarr, bear a hand here and get this fellow aboard the Viper."

“Well, Ferriss,” said Watson Camberly triumphantly, as the former foreman of the Lockyer yard helped lift the unconscious inventor, “well, Ferriss, did I do a good day’s work? It looks to me as if Atlas stock will take a jump shortly.”

CHAPTER XVI.

INTO THE THICK OF IT.

While Ned and Herc were casting desperately but ineffectively about for some means of frustrating, what they now believed was a deliberate plot to get the inventor into some kind of a trap, old Tom came on deck.

"Ahoy, shipmates," he began; "you've shipped funeral faces. What's in the wind?"

"Trouble enough and then some," replied Herc gloomily.

In response to Tom's questions, Ned rapidly rehearsed what had happened and their apprehensions regarding it.

"Phew!" whistled old Tom, when he had heard him out. "Things look like squalls and no mistake, and here we are, as helpless as so many babies. If only we had a boat. A good fast one, too. One like that fellow has, for instance."

He indicated a motor launch which was scoot-

ing across the water, her red and green side lights shining through the dusk like bright jewels.

"Yes, if we only had her," began Ned, and then: "Hullo, she's coming this way. Wonder if it's news?"

Rapidly, and watched with what interest you may suppose, the strange launch approached the submarine, finally chugging up alongside and coming to a stop.

"Bother it all, it's only one of those reporters," grunted Herc, in an audible aside.

The young fellow in the boat, which he was running himself, heard, being possessed of sharp ears. But, instead of being offended, he burst into a merry laugh.

"Yes, only one of those reporters," he chuckled. "That's right. But in this case I have come to give information, not to ask it. Is Mr. Lockyer on board?"

"No, we are sorry to say, he isn't," replied Ned gloomily.

"Or any of the naval officers?"

"Nor they, either. Is it anything important?"

"Why, yes, in a way. It concerns Mr. Lockyer particularly. Do you know where he's gone?"

"No, and I wish we did. He left in a boat for the shore some few minutes ago."

"Then that must have been the row boat in which he was riding—that one I passed on my way out here."

"I guess so. A bearded man was rowing it?"

"Couldn't see that. It was getting pretty dark. Bother it all, I wish I could have seen Mr. Lockyer before he left."

A sudden intuition came to Ned. Perhaps this young reporter knew something of the mysterious business that had taken Mr. Lockyer ashore. At any rate, there was no harm in asking him.

"To be frank with you," he said, "we are pretty anxious about Mr. Lockyer. We learned before he left that he had an appointment at a lonely place along the beach. I recollected that his boatman was a bad character with whom we formerly came in contact."

"Then why didn't you tell Mr. Lockyer?" was the reporter's natural inquiry.

"Because my memory refused to come to time. The chap was in disguise. It was only his eyes and his voice, which he had altered, that seemed familiar. Putting two and two together, it looks as if some mischief was afoot."

"You're right," rejoined the reporter earnestly. "That's what I came off to see Mr. Lockyer about. After supper at the hotel this evening I was walking about the patch of a garden they have there when I overheard some voices in a summer house. I did not mean to listen, but before I could get away I heard Mr. Lockyer's name mentioned and then a muttered curse growled out. That interested me and I soon heard enough to convince me that the men in there were discussing a plot to lure Mr. Lockyer to a deserted hotel and then kidnap him in a motor boat and make him a prisoner on one of the islands in the upper part of the inlet till he either gave them the rights to manufacture his type of boat for a foreign government, or else till it was too late for the United States government to bother any more with the Lockyer boat."

“Jumping sand toads!” yelled Herc; “you were right, then, Ned. Did you recognize any of the fellows, sir?”

“I heard one addressed as Gradbarr. The other one, creeping closer and peering through the bushes, I perceived to be a man who had been passing himself off as a reporter. He made a disturbance on the boat this morning. Armstrong, he said his name was.”

“Then there is no doubt that Mr. Lockyer is in desperate need of help,” gasped Ned, “but what are we going to do?”

“Go to his aid,” said the practical-minded reporter.

“But a boat. We haven’t one. Say, old man, I wonder if you’d send one off from shore, and ——”

“I’ll do better than that.”

“You will?”

“Yes. We can take this one. I scent a good story here. Luckily I can run a craft of this kind to the queen’s taste. Lockyer was in a row boat. If we get a wiggle on, we may be able

to overtake them before they land. You know where they are going?"

"Yes; to the old Banta House," responded Ned. "Here, Herc, dive below and get some pistols; we may need them. Tell the foreman what we are about to do. Tom, we'll need you along, for we may have a desperate fight on our hands."

"I've got a gun of my own," volunteered the reporter.

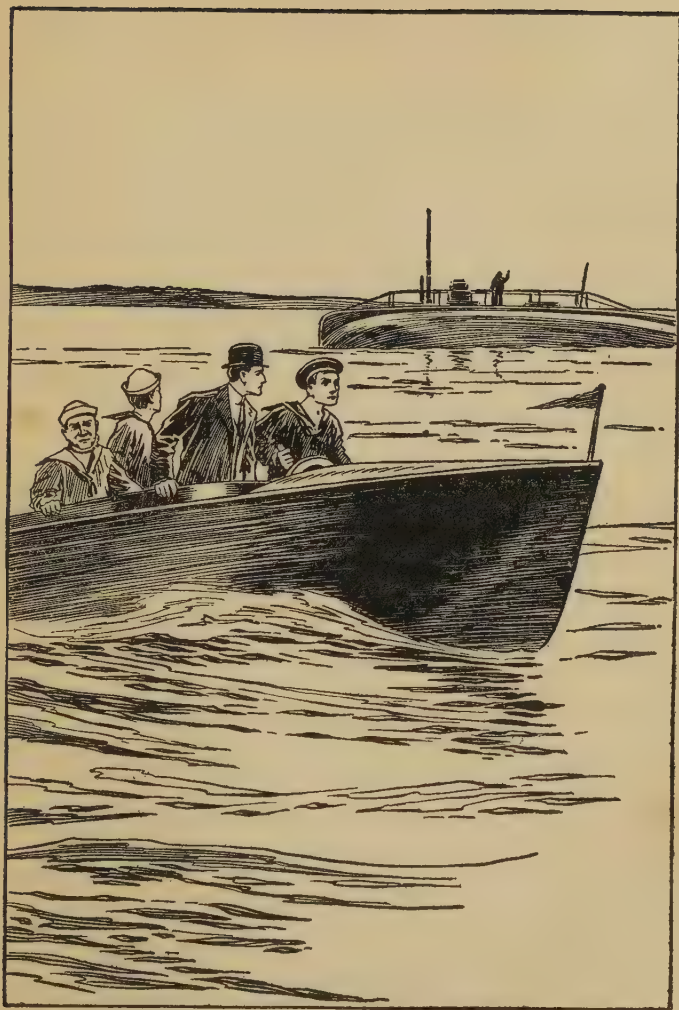
"I don't know how to thank you for helping us out," exclaimed Ned. "You happened along in the nick of time."

"Don't thank me," laughed the reporter. "This thing will make a cracking good story and beat for my paper."

Herc was soon back on deck. With him came Andy Bowler. The latter was full of questions, but Ned only spared time to give him the merest outline of their mission.

"I guess this is against rules and regulations," he said, as they tumbled into the boat, "but it's in line of duty, and we've got to see it through."

Five minutes later they were swishing through



Five minutes later they were swishing through the water in the newspaperman's motor boat.

the water in the newspaper man's hired motor boat—a handy little craft, capable of doing her twelve miles without heating up a bearing.

“Might as well tell our real names,” laughed the reporter, as they sped along. “Mine's Hargraves—Van Hargraves, of the *Planet*.”

Ned introduced himself and his companions. But while he was doing this, his eyes hardly left the waters ahead of them. Darkness had now shut in, but on the water there is usually a faint illumination, even if it is only from the reflected stars. But on all the expanse ahead of him the Dreadnought Boy could see nothing to indicate the boat they were in pursuit of.

“Do you know where this Bantam House, or whatever its name, is?” asked young Hargraves, as they neared the shore.

“Ought to be able to pick it up by the big clump of evergreens about it,” rejoined Ned. “They are the only trees along that part of the beach. They ought to stand up against the sky like a church.”

“If only there was a moon,” wished Herc.

"Avast there!" cried old Tom suddenly, springing to his feet and holding to the gunwale. "What's that right on your port bow, lad. See, off there?"

He pointed shoreward, or, rather, in the direction in which they knew the shore must lie.

"Looks like a clump of trees. It's something black and bulky, anyhow," decided Hargraves.

Ned, who had taken the precaution to bring a night glass along, placed the instrument to his eyes.

"It is trees," he announced; "a big grove of them. That must be the Banta House."

"Fine and dandy!" exclaimed Herc. "Now we——"

Bang!

The sharp report of a pistol split the night right ahead of them. Among the dark shadows of the grove of trees they could see, for a breath, a flash of red flame.

"Phew!" whistled Hargraves. "I guess we've hit the trail of trouble, all right. That was a pistol shot, and a pistol shot means a story."

"I hope it means nothing worse," rejoined Ned anxiously. "What can have happened?"

"No use expectrapating (speculating?) on that, lad," struck in old Tom. "Better get this peanut roaster speeded up a bit and be ready for action when we hit the shore."

"I'm ready for action right now," said Herc grimly, clicking the lock of his pistol ominously.

"Can't you make this boat go faster?" urged Ned of the reporter.

The other replied in the negative.

"She's got all the gasoline and all the spark I can give her now," he said. "We couldn't do an inch more if a torpedo was chasing us."

An instant later they ran in beside a rickety wharf, which, as it so happened, was some little distance below the one at which Mr. Lockyer had been landed, and had been intended for trade boats to land at, while the other had been designed for the use of yachts and pleasure craft. To make fast the painter and get ashore was the work of a jiffy. Under Ned's directions they scattered.

"Two shots in quick succession will be the signal that one of us has struck the trail," whispered Ned, as they separated. "Don't forget now, two shots close together mean trouble. It will be the duty of each of us to get there as soon as possible when he hears them fired. So long!"

He slipped off into the darkness under the mournful spruce and hemlocks. The others darted off with equal alacrity in the directions to which he had assigned them.

But it was Ned who was to "strike the trail" first. Plunging as silently as possible through the dark shadows of the overhanging trees, he presently emerged on what had evidently once been a driveway. He with difficulty choked back a gasp of amazement as he perceived standing there, unlighted and silent—an automobile!

"Jove! here's what they came in," he muttered.

As he uttered his thought half aloud, voices at some little distance struck into his hearing.

"Bring him along. The machine should be right here some place. Say, that was a hard tap you gave him, Gradbarr."

"The better to keep him quiet with," grunted another voice, which Ned instantly recognized as that of the rascally machinist.

There was need for quick thinking on Ned's part. Lockyer's captors were near at hand. In a few brief seconds they would have the inventor's unconscious form in the car. That much was clear from the fragments of their talk the boy had caught. In a flash Ned's mind was made up. Slipping back into the brush, he raised his revolver and fired two shots in rapid succession.

As he had expected, there was instant uproar. The party with Lockyer in custody paused, startled by the very suddenness of the thing. At the same time shouts and cries arose from several points of the abandoned hotel grounds.

While the confusion was at its height, Ned darted forward, and, leaping nimbly into the tonneau of the machine, he ran his hand under the back seat. As he had expected, there was quite a space under there, and, making as little noise as possible, the boy crawled into it. Hardly had he tucked in his toes before a heavy footstep

came on the running board, and a voice ordered gruffly:

“Chuck Lockyer in, boys, and look lively. In some way the police have got wise to us.”

“Police nothing,” came another voice, which Ned, with a distinct thrill, knew to be Gradbarr’s. “If them Dreadnought Boys ain’t got something to do with this, call me a Dutchman.”

Then came the noise of something limp and heavy being stowed on the seat of the tonneau, followed by a shuffling and stamping as the members of the rascally party of abductors boarded the car. A minute later, just as the amazed party from the submarine came dashing through the bushes, the auto leaped forward.

On into the night it roared, a fusillade of bullets from Ned’s friends spattering harmlessly about it as it thundered on.

CHAPTER XVII.

A SURPRISE PARTY WITH A VENGEANCE.

For what Ned judged to have been half an hour, or possibly a little longer, the car plunged along. Then, as suddenly as it started, it came to a stop. The conversation of the occupants of the car was now perfectly audible, and Ned's heart beat wildly as among them he recognized the tones of Channing Lockyer. The inventor had then recovered his senses, which, as the boy knew from what he had overheard, must have been lost following the blow from Gradbarr.

"Look here, Ferriss," Ned from his hiding place could hear Mr. Lockyer saying, "what you are doing is not only dastardly, but senseless. I tell you now once and for all that whatever you may do to me, I shall never sign any paper or make any agreement with you concerning the submarine."

"We'll see about that," a gruff voice, which Ned supposed must be that of Ferriss, responded. "But I warn you now, Lockyer, not to give us too much trouble. You are absolutely in our power. We are about to take you to a lonely island where we could hide you for ten years without any one being the wiser. We shall keep you there till you have had time to reflect whether it is better to accept our terms for your craft, or to let her rot uselessly while you are reported missing."

"Missing!" gasped Lockyer.

"Yes. Your friends will all believe that you have been drowned. You don't think that we are such simpletons as not to have provided for that, do you? We have set the boat in which you were rowed ashore to-night adrift. She is bottom up, and any one finding her will imagine that she has capsized. Under one of her thwarts we have placed your hat, so that there will be no doubt as to your fate. Your friends will mourn you for a time as drowned, and then both you and the Lockyer boat will be forgotten."

"Good heavens, Ferriss!" exclaimed the inventor, as the full purport of this cleverly concocted plot burst upon him. "Are you a man or a monster?"

"A little of both," rejoined the other complacently. "The Far Eastern nation of which I told you before needs your boat. We have contracted to get it for them. We'll do it, too."

"But even if I signed your papers what good would that do you?" asked Lockyer. "Who would believe you had authority?"

"Everybody," was the calm rejoinder. "We would arrange to have you kept a prisoner till we were safe in the East with your plans and specifications. The power we have mentioned as being interested in your boat has the reputation of being a good friend to those who befriend it. They would take care that we came to no harm, no matter what steps you took after your escape."

"But the United States——"

"Has far too much to attend to to go to war over one inventor, my friend. Besides, we have influence at Washington that you know nothing

of. No, Lockyer, your best plan is to draw for us a complete set of plans, and then you are at liberty to go."

"And let you reap the benefit of my years of work and thought?"

"We intend to pay you as I told you. Of course, we should also require a receipt from you. That receipt of payment alone would absolve us from any guilt in connection with the transaction. It would show, don't you see, that you sold out your government willingly."

"Great heaven!" groaned the unhappy inventor, as he saw the web being drawn more tightly about him.

"But come, we're wasting time here," struck in another voice, that of Watson Camberly, although, of course, Ned, burning with indignation in his hiding place, did not recognize it. "We must get over to the island. Will you come with us willingly, Lockyer, or shall we have to bind you?"

"You need not bind me," was the bitter reply. "I cannot see how I could well be more helpless."

"I am glad you realize at last that we have the whip hand," snarled the voice of Ferriss.

"Gradbarr, you stay here and guard the car," ordered Camberly the next moment, after an interval, in which Ned could feel them leaving the auto. "We'll take the boat out to the island and return before long."

Ned listened to their retreating footsteps for a few minutes. As they died away, he heard Gradbarr walking about the car, doubtless trying to keep warm, for the fall air was sharp as it blew in off the Sound. But still as he lay, the lad's mind was hard at work. Presently, and very cautiously, he raised the leather flap which hung in front of his place of concealment and peeped out. The guardian of the car was leaning against the front wheel with his back to Ned. He was whistling in a low key. Any one seeing him would little have imagined what nefarious business he was engaged in. Ned's mind was made up in a flash. He must act now, or not at all. Before long, there was no doubt from what he had heard, that the others would be back.

Gripping his weapon tightly, he noiselessly slipped out of the tonneau, the side door of which had been left open. Before Gradbarr could make any preparations, or indeed was even aware of what was happening behind his back, the ruffian was startled by a sudden voice in his ear.

"Don't move an inch, Gradbarr, or there'll be trouble."

"What!" roared out the startled rascal, and would have said more, but that at that instant he felt a certain chilly disc pressed against the back of his neck, which instinct told him was the muzzle of a pistol.

"Now do as I tell you," ordered Ned crisply. "Get up on the seat of that car and drive back into Grayport."

"Into Grayport?"

Gradbarr began to whimper like the coward he was, as he echoed the words. Also he had recognized Ned's voice and knew the lad was not to be trifled with.

"That's what I said," ordered the Dreadnought

Boy sharply. "Don't hesitate, or I'll give you a lesson in navy tactics."

"Oh, but I'll be arrested," whined the ruffian, still not daring to turn.

"You certainly will," Ned assured him. "You have been going a long time, Gradbarr, but here is where your career reaches a sudden termination."

"Come on now." To emphasize his words, Ned pressed the muzzle of the revolver more closely to Gradbarr's neck. The fellow moved forward, cringing and whimpering, but before he had taken a step something happened which completely turned the tables.

Ned felt himself suddenly enwrapped from behind by a pair of powerful arms, while at the same moment a harsh voice grated out:

"Just in time it seems."

Gradbarr whipped round at the sudden interruption and gave a cry of delight. He laughed aloud as he saw Ned struggling desperately, but ineffectually in the arms of his captor.

"Good work, Mr. Camberly," he exclaimed,

with a chuckle. "I guess I won't go back to Grayport to-night, after all."

As he spoke he aimed a vicious blow at Ned. The rascal's fist struck the Dreadnought Boy full in the face.

"You scoundrel," flared out Ned. "Set me free and see if you dare to strike me."

"Set you free," sneered the voice behind him, the owner of which still held the boy's arms tightly pinioned. "Not to-night, my boy, and perhaps not for many nights. Gradbarr, get that rope that we meant for Lockyer out of the tonneau. We'll truss this young turkey cock up and take some of the fight out of him."

Raging furiously within, Ned was compelled resistlessly to submit to the indignity of being bundled up hand and foot in the rope by Gradbarr. The former machinist thoroughly enjoyed his job, as was evinced by the way he grinned and chuckled as he viciously drew the cords tight.

"Ho! Ho! Ho!" he jeered. "It looks as if I was going to get even at last for the other night

when you thought you had me bottled up at the boat yard. Take that, you young sneak!"

He aimed another hard blow at Ned's face, but this time Camberly checked him.

"That will do, Gradbarr," he warned. "Wait till we get him to the island if you have any old scores to pay off. You can attend to them there at your leisure."

"Won't Anderson be tickled to death when he sees him," muttered Gradbarr. "The dirty young spy. Just think he was hiding under those cushions in the tonneau all the time we were driving out here."

"We'll make him tell us just how he got there later on," said Camberly. "For the present just run that car into that brush at the side of the road. We don't want to leave it standing where it will attract attention."

It only took Gradbarr a few seconds to obey, and then he came back to gloat once more over Ned. But once more Camberly cut him short.

"You take his feet. I'll take his head," he ordered. "Come on, quick march for the boat."

"Oh, guv'ner, ain't this a treat," chuckled Gradbarr, as he obeyed. "But how did you ever come to show up in the nick of time?"

"Why, we found when we reached the boat that one of the spark plugs needed tightening up," responded Camberly, with a snicker. "I volunteered to come back to the car for a wrench. Luckily I came softly, and arrived very opportunely for you."

"I should say so," agreed Gradbarr. "It seems that this young rooster had it all cut and dried to send me to prison."

"And you'll get there yet, you scoundrel," Ned burst out, and was angry at himself the next minute for his exhibition, for Camberly broke into a brutal laugh.

"My, isn't somebody mad," he chortled. "Well, we'll see if a little solitary confinement won't prove a good cure for a fit of bad temper."

In a moment more Ned felt himself being lifted from the ground and carried rapidly through the woods toward the shore. As they

emerged on the beach, a voice hailed them. It was Ferriss.

"What on earth have you got there?" he demanded, peering through the darkness at the bundle Gradbarr and Camberly were carrying.

"Why, a young man who has just accepted an invitation to a surprise party," laughed Camberly. "We're the hosts."

CHAPTER XVIII.

“SAFE AS IN A STEEL-LINED VAULT.”

Whatever the future may hold in store for them, it is doubtful if either Ned or Channing Lockyer will ever forget the moment that they met on that sandy beach, surrounded in the darkness by wicked and desperate men. The surprise, however, was all on the side of the inventor. His first impulse, as his eyes fell on the bound form and he recognized it, was to give a shout of joy. His next, however, was one of regret that another should have been dragged in to share his predicament. He had no idea, of course, how the Dreadnought Boy came to be there, nor had he an opportunity to inquire.

Before a word could be exchanged between these two so strangely met, they were hustled into a small flat-bottomed boat lying on the shore, and rapidly sculled off to a long, low-lying black motor-boat which lay at anchor a short distance

off shore. Once on board, the tender was at once taken in tow, the anchor hauled up, and, rapidly as a water snake, the gasoline-driven craft glided off into the darkness. Whither they were bound Ned had not the slightest idea. Only one thing was in his mind. That was a feeling of gladness that he was at least near to Channing Lockyer, and that helpless as he was at the moment, he might yet be able to render him some service, for Ned was not a lad whose spirits were easily downed. Otherwise, bound and helpless as he was, and in the hands of men whom he knew had every reason to hate him, he would have had good cause for apprehension.

How long it was before the motor craft stopped, Ned had no idea, but he knew by the lessening vibration of her engines that she was coming to a stop. Presently he heard her fenders scrape as she was run alongside a wharf. Then he was lifted up once more and carried swiftly along a small landing place and hustled off into the darkness. That they were crossing sand, he

knew by the noiseless progress of the two who were conveying him.

All at once the dark outlines of a building of some sort loomed up in front of him. But before he had time to take his bearings or get the least idea of where he was, Gradbarr, who had hold of his feet, dropped them and ran swiftly forward. Ned heard the sound of a door of some kind being slammed open.

Then Gradbarr came back and picked up his feet once more.

"Now then, in with him," he heard Camberly say, and before he had time to utter a cry, for, of course, it was impossible for him to move, Ned felt himself being held above a black pit—as it looked. The next instant he was dropped, into what abyss he knew not. A cry rang from his lips, but was stifled the next instant as he felt himself plunging down upon a floor, which, to his astonishment, was soft and yielding.

"Sand!" thought the boy.

For one brief instant he could see, through the still open trap door above him, the bright gleam

of the stars. The next moment, with an ominous crash, the door fell, blotting out the sky and leaving him in utter darkness. He heard a dull clanking of metal. Evidently his captors were securing the door from the outside. Then came a burst of smothered laughter from above, which made Ned's blood boil. This was succeeded by absolute silence.

Before long, however, he heard footsteps above him. They rang hollowly, as if on a wooden floor.

"Hum, so I'm in a cellar," thought Ned, "and I'll bet the hole out of a doughnut that it's the cellar of that bungalow I heard those rascals talking about while I lay hidden in the automobile. I wish to goodness I'd stayed there a while longer, I might have been of more help to Mr. Lockyer."

Some men, and most boys of Ned's age, finding themselves in pitch darkness, bound hand and foot and without the least idea of where they were save that they were in the hands of bad men, would have given way to despair. But this was

not the way with the Dreadnought Boy. For one thing, his navy training had borne fruit in giving him unusual self-reliance, a feeling that one of Uncle Sam's men must never give up the ship, not even when he feels her reeling and sinking beneath his feet. This feeling in great or less measure is in every heart that beats under a navy uniform, and it's a mighty good insurance for the country that it is so.

"Well," thought Ned to himself, "for apparent hopelessness this reminds me of that time we were all in that prison in Costaveza expecting to be shot. But we got out of that and maybe I'll find a way out of this yet. But I must confess that it looks as if Gradbarr and Co. rather had it on me for the present, at any rate."

He wiggled a hand, but if he had hoped to find any slack in his ropes he was disappointed. The same test applied to the ropes confining his lower limbs had no other result.

For some time he lay there in the darkness thinking up a dozen schemes to escape, all of which looked good at first, but each proved to

be impossible of execution after a moment's thought had been devoted to them.

"Wow! as Herc would say," thought Ned. "It begins to look as if I was up against it as never before since our naval career began. I wonder what the other fellows are doing? They may have tried to trace the auto, but even if they succeed in finding it, it won't do me any good. They'd never guess that those chaps had a motor boat."

Suddenly he heard voices above him. Evidently the men who had captured them had come out of the house.

"I guess they've imprisoned Lockyer up there," thought Ned. "Well, they certainly had their plans well laid for carrying out their campaign. Hullo! what's that they're saying?"

He listened attentively.

"Oh, they're safe enough," came in Gradbarr's voice. "That kid in the cellar will keep till Christmas, and as for that milksop inventor, what the bag began that sleeping stuff you gave him will complete. Come on you're as safe to take a run

ashore as if we had them both locked up in a steel-lined safe deposit vault."

"That's no dream," thought Ned.

"Well, I guess you're right, Gradbarr," replied Ferriss's voice, "and, as you say, we've got to put back to shore and pick up Anderson——"

"Oh-ho, so he's in this, too!" exclaimed Ned to himself. "What a choice collection of worthies."

"Yes, you'd better come along, Ferriss," urged Camberly. "Gradbarr will have to take the auto back to town. And in the event of trouble the three of us will be none too many."

"You think, then, that that boy's companions may have followed the car?"

"I don't think it's likely, but still they may have. There is no doubt in my mind, since we discovered that young Strong was hiding under the seat all the time, that the whole gang of them was on shore."

This came from Gradbarr.

"But how on earth did they discover our plan to kidnap Lockyer?" protested Ferriss.

"Search me," rejoined Gradbarr. "It's enough

for me that they did. If we had not got away when we did, we'd have had the whole hornet's nest about our ears. As it is, once we've got Anderson safely off shore, no one will be the wiser."

"Right you are," chuckled Ferriss, seemingly much relieved. "I hope Anderson did a good job on capsizing that boat. It's important that his friends should imagine that Lockyer is drowned. And, as I was saying——"

But here the voices, which for some seconds had been diminishing in volume, died away altogether. Ned realized that the men had deemed it safe for them all to leave the island and were now on their way to the boat.

"Now if I only could get free of these ropes," he muttered, "I could do a whole lot of surprising things before they get back."

The thought that, were it not for his bonds he could be free and at work to save them both, rendered Ned almost desperate. He thrashed about wildly, rolling hither and thither in a frantic attempt to somehow loosen the knots that bound him. But Gradbarr had worked around

shipyards too long not to be able to tie a knot that would hold. The ropes did not yield the fraction of an inch. On the contrary, they began to cut into Ned's flesh and pain him intensely.

All at once, as he rolled, something struck his right hand, and a sharp thrill of pain shot through him.

"Ouch!" he exclaimed, "there's something sharp in the sand. Feels like I'd given myself a bad cut."

He lay still, then, and as he gave over his mad threshings about, he could feel the warm blood trickling from the cut that he had received from the sharp object, whatever it was. All at once, however, a thought shot through him that speedily banished all idea of pain or sense of injury.

If that object, lying half-buried in the sand, was sharp enough to cut his hand, surely it was sharp enough to sever his ropes!

With wildly throbbing pulses and a heart that beat as if it would choke him, Ned began tumbling about again. But his rollings and heavings

had a definite object now—to locate again the sharp thing that had cut him. He was about despairing of finding it when, all at once, he felt something grate against the taut ropes at his wrist. Rolling over till his weight bore down on the object he had encountered, the Dreadnought Boy swayed his body as much as he could, so as to chafe the rope. Once, twice, thrice, he wriggled, and then—oh glory!—he felt the rope part with a quick snap.

An instant later he had a hand loose and was rapidly uncoiling the long rope wrapped about him. Another five minutes and he was free, but oh how stiff! Pins and needles shot through his limbs. He felt quite sick and faint as he stood upright.

“Here, this won’t do,” he thought; “I’ve only got a short time to act in, and I’ll have to make the best of it.”

He fell to chafing his stiff limbs, and soon had the blood comfortably circulating.

“Wonder what that was that so providentially gave me a cut fist and then set me free?” mused

the lad, feeling about in the sand as he waited the moment when he could stir without excruciating pain. He soon found it, the broken end of a bottle. Evidently, when the cellar had been made, the glass object had been left in the sand. If ever there was an instrument of providence, that broken glass bottle had proved itself to be the article.

"I feel like having you mounted in gold," said Ned to himself, as he ran his fingers over it in the darkness.

As his stiffness vanished, Ned rapidly became a very much animated young prisoner. Feeling his way in the darkness, he soon came to a flight of steps. These, he surmised readily enough, led upward to the door through which he had been tumbled so unceremoniously. But a short examination sufficed to show him that it would be impossible to make an exit that way. It was, evidently, clamped too firmly on the outside for it to be a feasible project to open it.

Rather cast down at this discovery, for somehow he had calculated on getting out that way,

Ned started a systematic round of the cellar. It was walled with rough stone, against which he groped in the darkness as he went round it. All at once, his hands encountered an empty space. By dint of feeling he could make out that the wall at that point was built in a U-shape, as if it had been intended to make a chimney or a fireplace there.

Hardly had he made this discovery before Ned found out something else.

This was, that by gazing upward he could feel a cool breeze in his face. Presently, far above him he saw the glimmer of stars.

"Hooray!" cried the boy; "that looks good. Now, let's see, I must be at the bottom of a chimney of some kind. Maybe it has an opening into one of the rooms of the house above. At any rate, it may be possible to climb up it—it's wide enough. Here goes for a try, anyhow."

CHAPTER XIX.

NED IS ASTONISHED.

He felt about, and soon made out that the chimney was made of rough stone, with rather wide interstices between each boulder. It was an easy matter to clamber up it, and soon Ned was on his way toward the stars framed by the top of the structure. But when he had reached a height of some ten feet above the cellar floor, a strange thing happened. One of his feet struck a part of the chimney, which gave out a hollow sound. Moreover, the sound was that of wood.

“Guess that there must be a fireplace opening there,” thought the Dreadnought Boy; “evidently, they had it boarded up for the summer, or maybe the chimney was never finished. Guess that must be it. Now, the question is, what lies beyond that board?”

As if in answer to his unspoken thought, he

heard, at that moment, a distinct groan coming from the other side of the board.

"That must be Mr. Lockyer," was the boy's instant thought; "wonder how tight ~~this~~ board is?"

A hearty kick soon solved the question. The board flew outward into the room with a clatter, and the next instant Ned beheld the face of Channing Lockyer once more. The inventor was seated at a table in a room which, apparently, contained no other furniture beside that and the chair to which, in a close view, it became apparent he was tightly bound. In one corner of the place a lamp, on a high shelf, shed a sickly light.

"Mr. Lockyer!" cried the boy.

The inventor met his gaze with a half-dazed look that somehow sent a creepy feeling through the boy. Crossing the room in a few steps he shook the other's shoulder.

"Mr. Lockyer? I've come to save you. What is it? What's the matter?"

A hollow groan was the response, and the in-

ventor, who had, seemingly, been partially roused when the chimney-board fell in, let his head sink forward on the table once more.

"By George!" exclaimed Ned, with a sudden remembrance; "I recollect now. Those fellows did say something about having drugged him. The stuff seems to be still working. Whatever will I do. They'll be back before long, and we ought to be out of here."

Reasoning that it would be probably his best course of action to cut the inventor loose, Ned drew his knife, of which his captors had not bothered to deprive him, and slashed the ropes that bound Channing Lockyer to the chair. As his bonds relaxed, the inventor slid heavily forward and sank in a heap on the floor.

"Well, if this isn't tough luck," groaned Ned; "what am I to do? I can't carry him far, that's certain. Guess I'll open the door and see if the fresh air will revive him."

He swiftly was at the portal. But it would not yield to his tugs.

"Locked on the outside!" exclaimed Ned; "I'll try the window."

That, too, was locked in some way he could not discover. But Ned was not one to be beaten by trifles like that. Picking up the chair, he swung it against the casement, carrying away sash and all. The blast of keen sea air that swept in seemed, to Ned's delight, to revive Mr. Lockyer. He stirred like a man awakening from a long sleep.

"Come, sir, come!" cried Ned, lifting him; "can't you stand?"

"I—what has happened?" asked the inventor thickly. He stared about him with a blank look.

"You've been drugged by rascals, but I'm going to get you out of here," rejoined Ned; "come, sir; rouse up. Ah, that's better," as the inventor, with the lad's aid, got to his feet. He stood staggeringly, and then Ned, as gently as he could, half-dragged, half-carried him to the window.

"Have to lift him through," thought Ned, as Mr. Lockyer gazed blankly about him. Evi-

dently he had little knowledge of what was happening.

Putting his strong, young arms about the inventor's slight form, Ned lifted him through the window. Then he followed.

"A fighting chance," he breathed, as, gathering up Lockyer in his arms, he began a staggering run across the heavy sands. Coarse grass grew upon the island, which bothered him a good deal, but in the emergency before him, Ned seemed endowed with superhuman strength.

As one direction seemed as good as another, he did not pay much heed to where he was going. Before long he reached the margin of the island. At least, he could hear the ripple of tiny waves on the beach.

"Good land," breathed the lad to himself, setting down Mr. Lockyer's limp form, "it will be child's play to find us now. If only there were some way to escape from the island, but I guess there isn't, and we're out of the frying pan into the fire."

It was a bitter pill to swallow. To have come



"A fighting chance," he breathed, as, gathering up Lockyer in his arms, he began a staggering run across the heavy sands.

so far and surmounted such obstacles only for this! For Ned, against all manner of reason, perhaps, had treasured, deep down in his heart, a hope that, after all, what he thought an island might turn out to be a part of the mainland. He realized that there was no use dwelling in this fool's paradise any longer.

As he stood there under the stars, without a hope left, a sudden sound was borne to his ears. It was as ominous an interruption to the hush of the night as could be imagined.

The swift, sharp chug-chug of a motorboat's exhaust.

To Ned, it meant only one thing. Ferriss and his companions were returning. In a few minutes they would have discovered the escape and then would scatter and search the island. In that case, their recapture was inevitable.

"Well, Ned Strong," said the Dreadnought Boy half-aloud, "this looks like the beginning of a particularly lively end."

But to Ned's stark astonishment, the next instant a familiar sound came over the water from

the direction in which the approaching chug-chug was manifest.

“Jer-us-o-hos-o-phat, shipmates, my advice is ter cruise back to the submarine. Wherever them varmints has taken Ned Strong and Mr. Lockyer, we won’t be able to find ’em. Not to-night, anyhow.”

“Which is just where you’re wrong, Tom Marlin!” hailed Ned, his voice fairly aquiver with gladness.

“A-h-o-y!” came an amazed hail from the water. “Ned Strong, my hearty, are you there, or is it your ghost?”

“It’s me, dear old Tom; but hurry and get alongside there. Is Herc with you, and young Sim?”

“Here safe and sound, Ned,” shouted the well-known voice of the red-headed lad; “thank goodness, we’ve found you.”

“And Mr. Lockyer, too,” shouted back Ned, in response to the glad shouts that came in a perfect torrent from the other boat.

“What! How on earth——?”

"Never mind that now. Never mind anything now but getting that boat in here as close as you can. They'll be coming back before long."

Not stopping to ask who "they" might be, the boat was run close in to the shore till not more than a foot of water was between her keel and the bottom. Then Ned, picking up the still half-dazed inventor, waded out to her and, presently, they were safe aboard.

"Say!" exclaimed the reporter, as Ned swiftly told his story, "let's stay here and give those rascals a fight."

"I'd like to," said Herc wistfully; "maybe we could arrest them and land them where they belong, which is in jail."

But Ned vetoed the proposition. For one thing, it was important to get Mr. Lockyer back to where he could have medical attention, for whatever kind of stuff the rascals had given him, it seemed to have completely overcome him. He sat in the bottom of the launch with a vacant look on his face. The little craft was, accordingly, put about and headed for Grayport. As they

chugged along Herc told how they came to happen along at such an opportune moment for Ned.

After they had heard the auto speed off, they had given chase for a while, but had finally desisted when they saw it was useless. Then they began to look about for Ned, and discovered that he was gone. For a time they were at a despairing standstill, but, after a lot of discussion, it was agreed to head up the Inlet toward the islands, as Reporter Hargraves recollected having heard the ruffians, who had abducted Lockyer, mention the islands in their talk in the summer house. They had been cruising around for some time among the deserted summer colony of bungalows and islands, and were about ready to give up the search when they heard Ned's hail.

On the way back to Grayport they encountered something which was to have played an important part in Ferriss's plans. This was the drifting boat in which Gradbarr had rowed Lockyer ashore. Drifting about, bottom up as she was, they almost ran her down in the darkness. On

turning her over, they found that Anderson had carried out his instructions to the letter, for under one of the thwarts was Mr. Lockyer's hat.

"Gracious!" exclaimed Herc, with a shudder, "suppose we had not found you and had encountered this boat on our way back? We would have given up Mr. Lockyer for lost for certain, and your fate would have been a mystery to us."

No time was lost in reporting on board the Lockyer, where anxiety and apprehension were naturally at fever heat. Lieutenant Parry and Midshipman Stark had returned some hours before, but they were pacing the deck, on the lookout for news of some sort, when the launch, with the returned adventurers, arrived.

Warm, indeed, were the congratulations showed upon the lads and the reporter, who had aided them so materially. Mr. Lockyer was placed in a bunk, and Lieutenant Parry, who had some knowledge of medicine, administered some remedies to him. Such good effect did they have that when a doctor came from the shore in the

morning there was not much for him to do, except to look profound and recommend rest.

The police were communicated with, and a force of men sent to the island on which Mr. Lockyer had been imprisoned. Evidences of a hasty flight were found there. Evidently, Ferriss and his companions had returned, and finding that in some mysterious way their prisoners had escaped, had not deemed it wise to linger.

The auto had been hired, it was discovered, from a reputable garage in the town. As for the bungalow, that had been rented by Ferriss some days before. He had represented himself as an invalid anxious to try the fresh-air cure, and the real estate agent who rented the place to him had had no suspicion of the real purposes for which he wanted it. Although a "general alarm" was sent out for all who had taken part in the dastardly night's work, no trace was discovered of them in Grayport or the vicinity.

"I guess they've fired their last gun," commented Ned, when this information was brought off to the submarine that evening. But in this

the Dreadnought Boy was mistaken. Such men as Ferriss do not accept defeat kindly. It only enrages their degraded natures and makes them hungry for vengeance on those who they deem have thwarted their ends.

CHAPTER XX.

TOM'S VERY THICK FOG.

From being a place which had little existence besides a name on the map, Grayport had suddenly blossomed out into quite a celebrated spot. Naturally, Hargraves's story of the attack on the submarine experimenters, and the stories of the other men concerning the interesting tests, excited a great deal of attention. All sorts of people began to flock to Grayport. Among them came several cranks. All day long quite a flotilla of small boats maneuvered about the submarine as she lay at anchor, but nobody was allowed aboard. Even the newspaper correspondents, after they had been given that first story, were barred.

For two days following the adventures of the night of Mr. Lockyer's abduction, the Lockyer lay idle at her moorings. But within her steel shell, things were anything but idle. Incessant

work was going forward on the engines, getting them to the highest possible state of efficiency. The reason for this was, at present, a mystery to the boys, but it lay in the fact that Lieutenant Parry's report had been so favorable that the Government had decided to send a special board to Grayport to investigate the little diving vessel.

So it came about, that on the morning of the third day, when Mr. Lockyer was completely recovered, and his usual active, nervous self once more, a trim-looking gunboat steamed into Grayport harbor, and cast anchor not far from the little vessel. Lieutenant Parry, calling his crew together, then made an announcement which thrilled them all. That evening, in all probability, they would start on a long trial spin with the members of the board as passengers. He impressed them all that he wished the Lockyer to be put through her best paces. Mr. Lockyer thanked him with a look for his words. So far, the submarine had done all that she should, but the crucial test, under keen, impartial eyes, remained.

Shortly afterward, Lieutenant Parry, in a shore boat, left the Lockyer for the gunboat—the Louisville. He was on his way to pay his respects to Captain McGill, the president of the testing board, and his brother officers. When he returned on board again before noon, it was with the five officers comprising the party of investigation. All wore their uniforms and made an imposing array.

The Lockyer, too, with the naval members of her crew in blue uniform, was decked out like a fighting ship. From her stern fluttered the Stars and Stripes. From her forward mooring-bits, to the last bolt on her keelson plate, she had been scoured and polished.

“A smart-looking little craft,” commented Captain McGill, after he had been introduced to Mr. Lockyer. The inventor colored with pleasure.

“I hope to prove to you, sir, that she is as smart as she looks,” he rejoined.

The officers now took possession of the cabin, and the boys and the remainder of the crew were banished to the engineers’ quarters. They were

rather cramped, and Ned was not sorry when it came to the turn of himself and Herc to take watch on deck.

They were kept busy enough up there, answering questions and fending off too-inquisitive boats, whose occupants were eager to come on board. After an inspection of the vessel, the naval party went ashore in the gunboat's launch to send some despatches to Washington. This done, they embarked once more to take council with Captain McGill on board the Louisville.

This afforded the men left on board more freedom, and they took turns at coming on deck for a bit of fresh air. Toward the middle of the afternoon—to the boys' consternation—a heavy fog came rolling in. It began to look as if the distance cruise that night might have to be abandoned. Old Tom gazed at the wreaths of vapor as they came drifting in from the Sound, wrapping the waters about the Lockyer in a white obscurity.

"If this don't lift by sundown it's good for all night," he remarked. "Say," he went on sud-

denly, "did I ever tell you lads about the time I was in a fog in the English Channel on board the old wind-jammer Wampus?"

The boys shook their heads.

"Well, here goes for the yarn, then," said old Tom. "The Wampus was one of them bluff-bowed old craft that they used to build by the mile, and sell by the foot. I was on board her on a voyage from Brest to Boston. All went well till we got in the English Channel, when a thick, pea-soup-kind of a fog shut down on us. It was so bad that you couldn't see the fore-castle from the stern.

"It was my trick at the wheel that afternoon, and for company I had the skipper, an old Maine Yankee. He was so plum nervous that all he could do was to pace up and down and cuss the fog. The English Channel is crowded with shipping, and every now and then——

"M-o-o-o-o-m! would go some fog horn off in the smother.

"All to once, we both give a jump. Right dead ahead of us we heard a fog horn start up.

“M-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-m!

“I tell you, it gave me the shivers to hear it. ‘Hard over!’ bawls the skipper, and I spun that wheel round like a squirrel, I tell you. Well, her head swung off, but it didn’t seem to be no good.

“M-o-o-o-o-o-o-m! come that sound again, and it seemed ter be jest ther same place as it was before.

“ ‘Confound them, are they tagging us?’ shouts Captain Wellfleet.

“ ‘Looks like it, sir,’ says I, swinging her over and going off on the other tack. But no sooner was we headed the other way than I’m blessed if that same old horn didn’t start up again.

“M-o-o-o-o-o-m!

“ ‘It’s the Flying Dutchman!’ declares the skipper, who was one of the old-school, hard-shell sailormen, and believed in Adamaster and all them things. By that time, although I didn’t take much stock in such yarns as that, I began to think there was something out of the ordinary in the wind. Well, sir, for half an hour or more we swung to and fro, and always we’d have that same old ‘M-o-o-o-o-o-m!’ dead ahead of us.

“And so it kept up till it came time to change watches. The fog was just as thick as ever, and we didn’t see my relief coming from for’ard till he reached the waist. By this time the skipper was jumping about from one foot to the other, pretty nearly daffy. And still, every now and then, we’d hear that ‘M-o-o-o-o-m!’ right off our bow. It was fairly uncanny, I’m telling you, the way it chased us.

“‘Send the cook aft, and tell him to make me a cup of tea,’ roars the skipper, as my relief comes up. ‘My nerves is knocked plum galley-west.’

“‘Sorry, sir,’ says the man; ‘the cook is doctoring the cow.’

“‘Doctoring the cow?’ bellows the skipper.

“‘Aye, aye, sir,’ says my mate; ‘she’s ate suthin’ that disagreed with her an’ she’s got a tummy-ache. Hark!’

“He held up his finger, and we hears that fog horn noise again.

“‘M-o-o-o-o-o-m!’

“‘Is that the horn-swoggled cow?’ roars the skipper, fair beside himself.

“‘Aye, aye, sir!’ says my mate, touching his cap; ‘she’s bin’ bellerin’ that way fer an hour or more.’

“‘Great shades of Neptune!’ yells the skipper, ‘and we’ve bin tagging all over the Channel, tryin’ ter git away from the beller of our own cow.’

“And that,” concluded old Tom solemnly, “was the worst fog I was ever in, boys. They do say, too, that bov-ine made fine corned beef, and they used the tin cow—condensed milk—for the rest of that ’ere voyage.”

“Say, Tom, do you expect us to believe that?” asked Herc, with a wink at Ned, after their laughter had subsided.

“Of course,” said the old man-o’-warsman indignantly. “If there’s any insulting doubt in your mind I’ll tell you the year and date of the month.”

“Ahoy, Lockyer!” came a hail through the fog at this moment.

“Ahoy!” hailed Ned, “what boat’s that?”

“Lockyer!” came the answer.

Ned knew at once from this, though the fog

hid the boat, that it was Lieutenant Parry and his party returning.

As commander *pro tem* of the submarine, Lieutenant Parry had answered to Ned's hail by giving the boat's name. 'This—under Navy usage—signified that he was the captain. Other commissioned officers would have hailed: "Aye, aye." Enlisted men would have replied: "Halloo!"

The short flight of steel steps, which did duty as an officer's gangway, was hastily lowered from the starboard side of the submarine, and the party received on board in Navy style.

"Doesn't look much like a cruise to-night, Lockyer, I'm afraid." Ned, standing at attention by the gangway, heard Lieutenant Parry remark this to the inventor as they went below.

But good fortune was to favor the submarine after all. At sundown a brisk breeze sprung up, before which the fog rapidly melted away. By dusk the skies were clear, and outside the harbor a sharp wind was kicking up white-caps in dancing water-rows. It was ideal weather for cruising, and when, after supper, the order came

to up anchor, the command was obeyed with alacrity.

But smart as the Lockyer had been in hastening to make ready for her start after the fog had lifted, another boat in the harbor was ahead of her in getting to sea. This was a largish catboat, which had come in that morning. Some time before the order came to "up anchor" on their own craft, the crew of the Lockyer had watched the catboat, on which were two men, slip from her moorings and, heeling gracefully before the breeze, run out of the harbor. Soon she was skipping across the Sound, bobbing about like a dancer in a quadrille. The dying light glowed goldenly on her big, single sail.

"Those fellows are off for a night's cruise, too," commented Herc, as he watched the white canvas glimmering more and more dimly in the gathering dusk.

"Guess they're reaching off for a run to Bridgeport," rejoined Ned. But in this surmise he came far—very far—from guessing the real object of the catboat's cruise.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SHIPWRECKED MEN—AND A BOX.

It was an exhilarating experience—this of racing through the wind-torn water. As Ned and Herc, who had been posted on deck-watch, for so long as the submarine cruised on the surface, stood in the lee of the conning-tower, muffled up in their warm reefers, they fairly chuckled with delight. Urged forward by her three propellers, the submarine's form slipped through the tumble of waters like a swift, gliding thing endowed with life.

"Wonder when we are going to dive?" said Ned, as on and on, through the dark, raced the little craft, her rounded steel sides gleaming wet with flung spray.

"Hope they don't forget us when they make up their minds to go under," said Herc, with a grin; "it's pretty dusty on the water to-night."

"No danger of our being forgotten," rejoined

Ned, with a laugh. "Wow, but they are speeding her up. I suppose they want to show that official outfit of big bugs what she can do."

This was the case. In the conning-tower, crowded closely together in that narrow space, were the naval officers. Their faces fairly shone as the Lockyer plunged through the heaving water-rows.

"This craft beats anything we have in the service up to date!" exclaimed Commander McGill enthusiastically.

"And I think you'll find she is as capable under the water as she is on the surface," put in Mr. Lockyer, his first apprehensive nervousness now gone. His boat was behaving magnificently. He felt that he could ask no more of any bit of machinery.

"Shall we prepare for a dive, sir?" inquired Lieutenant Parry.

"Not now, Parry," rejoined the Navy captain, glancing at his watch. "I want to keep this up for at least an hour. It is a severe test——"

"But she'll stand it. You'll see," interrupted Mr. Lockyer eagerly.

On and on rushed the Lockyer, her decks gleaming wetly as her bow threw back clouds of spray. The boys on deck were wet through, but in the exhilaration of the moment they did not feel it. This sensation of hissing through the water, fairly in the midst of the rolling waves, was a blood-stirring one.

Suddenly, Ned seized Herc's arm, and pointed out ahead.

"Look—look there, Herc!" he exclaimed.

The other, following the direction of his comrade's arm, instantly perceived, not more than half a mile off, the lights of a boat of some kind.

"They're coming straight for us," cried Herc; "what do they want to do? Run us down?"

"No danger of that," laughed Ned; "our sailing lights are on. I guess they're holding that tack till it's time to go about. She's a sailing craft of some sort. I can see the black outline of her sail."

For a few moments more they watched, and then Herc gave a cry.

"It's that catboat."

"What? The one we saw leave Grayport to-night?"

"That's right."

"Stay here a minute, Herc," exclaimed Ned; "I'm going forward to see if our sailing lights are all right."

The catboat was only a few hundred feet from them now, and still she had not altered her course. Ned slipped forward, through the water that swirled about on the decks as high as his knees. The side lights, elevated on iron frames, were found to be burning brightly and undimmed. His supposition that they had gone out and that the catboat had not sighted them was, therefore, untenable.

Hastening back, Ned placed his lips to a speaking-tube at the side of the tower and shouted in to the helmsman:

"Catboat off the starboard bow, sir, and making dead for us."

"Aye, aye," came back the hail from Midshipman Stark, who had the wheel. "We see her. Can you make out if she's going about?"

Ned placed his hands to his mouth funnel-wise and hailed the oncoming craft.

"Catboat ahoy!"

Then down the wind there came a flung reply:

"Aye, aye. Keep on your course. We'll tack directly."

"They'd better hurry up, then," thought Ned; "if they don't they'll be into us before you can say 'knife.'"

For a brief, nerve-tingling space of time they kept their eyes glued on the little craft. So near was she now that they could almost have thrown any object from the submarine's deck upon her's.

"See, they're going to tack!" cried Herc; "they're drawing the sheet tight and—— They're over!"

"Good heavens!" burst from Ned, as the sailing craft seemed to leap up into the wind for an instant, and then, without the slightest warning, capsized on her side.

Instantly the top of the conning-tower was thrown open by those inside who had witnessed the accident at the same moment.

Life-belts were hastily thrown out, and Ned, giving a strong heave, hurled one in the direction of the capsized catboat. Herc did the same. Both buoys were of the Navy type, carrying a small receptacle of chemical substances.

The chemicals, when they struck the water, ignited and burst into a steady blue flame. They illuminated the water with a ghastly radiance. In the weird glare those on the submarine could see two black objects struggling in the water alongside the catboat. The next instant the castaways were perceived to crawl out of the water and climb painfully up on to the keel of the capsized boat. They clung there, shouting, while Midshipman Stark maneuvered the *Luckyer* alongside.

Save for a few sharp words of command, none of the Navy party had shown the least trace of excitement. Trained to accept any emergency with stiff upper lips, Uncle Sam's sailors, be they

officers or men, don't waste words. But what they lack in hysterics, they make up in action. In less time than it takes to tell it, the submarine was alongside the capsized boat, and Ned and Herc were reaching out their arms to the two men on her keel. One of them, they noticed, clutched a box tightly in his arms.

"Jump," urged Ned; "we'll catch you."

The man with the box made a leap and slipped flounderingly on the wet steel plates of the diving vessel's side. He almost dropped his burden, but recovered it instantly. The other, however, seemed in no hurry. He was apparently fumbling with something at his waist.

"Hanged if he hasn't got on a life-belt," exclaimed Herc, as the first of the survivors was hurried below.

"That's right," exclaimed Ned; "when, on earth, did he have time to put one on?"

In fact, it did seem impossible, so suddenly had the catboat capsized, that her occupants would have had time to strap on the safety de-

vices. Did they then know that she was going to capsize before she went over?

But Ned had not time to revolve the puzzling question in his mind. The remaining man now made a clumsy jump, and almost missed the submarine, but strong arms caught him, and he was hauled on board. As he was dragged over the rail, however, something fell from his pocket which struck the steel deck with a metallic ring. It went bounding off, and vanished with a splash.

"A revolver!" gasped Ned; "now, what does a man, out for a sail in a catboat, want with a revolver?"

Both the rescued men were hurried below, and as Lieutenant Parry, who had emerged on deck, had noted by this time the drenched condition of Ned and Herc, he ordered them also below to change their uniforms and put on dry clothing. They entered one of the small staterooms to do so. As it happened, it was one adjoining the room into which the two rescued men had been ushered by the submarine's officers for the same purpose.

Although the staterooms appeared to be separated by thick, steel bulkheads, as a matter of fact these partitions were not so solid as they appeared. At the top of each was a lattice-work strip, through which air could circulate while the submarine was under the water. Evidently, the rescued men were not aware of this, for they took no care to sink their voices as they talked, and their conversation was not of a kind, so the boys judged, anyway, that they would have wished to blurt out from the housetops.

As the voices came floating through the lattice-work at the top of the bulkheads, Ned gripped Herc's arm to enjoin absolute silence. He did not, of course, wish to betray, by the slightest sound, the fact that they were there.

"Well, Ignacio," came one voice, "the first part of our task is accomplished. It was easier than I thought it would have been. For a moment I almost lost the box. A good thing they didn't try to examine it."

"That is right, Guiseppi," was the reply; "these fools on the submarine fell into the trap

very neatly. However, the hardest part of our duty lies still before us."

"Yes, but the reward makes it well worth the risk. If we are detected it will be easy to say that we were ignorant and wished to examine the machinery. They will never suspect. These Americans have the heads of wood and the senses of stone."

The other laughed aloud, which brought an angry caution from his friend.

"Not so loud," he enjoined; "it would not sound natural for shipwrecked men to be laughing. Play your part well, Ignacio. We must assume the sorrowful faces of men who have met with a serious accident."

"Do not fear for me, my friend. I can assume the doleful pose to perfection," rejoined the other. "Come, you have your dry clothes on?"

"Yes. I am already invested in my American uniform," rejoined the other, with a chuckle. "If they knew what we were on board for do you think they would treat us with such hospitality?"

"I think they would show us the hospitality of

throwing us overboard, my dear Guiseppi," chuckled Ignacio.

The listening boys heard the door open and close, and the next instant, out in the cabin, they could hear the two castaways giving a woeful narration of their disaster to Lieutenant Parry.

"Signor Captain," one was saying, "the tiller jammed so hard that before the poor boat could come about—poof!—the wind had blown her over and, behold, if it had not been for your extreme kindness, we would have been drowned."

"And, in my opinion, that would have been a fitting fate for the rascals," muttered Ned, viciously poking his head into a dry shirt as he spoke.

"Then you have made up your mind that it was all a trick?" asked Herc. "A plan hatched up to get a chance to board the Lockyer?"

"Isn't that evident from the way they were talking?" inquired Ned. "I mean to lose no time in communicating with Lieutenant Parry; those fellows will bear watching."

"It looks to me as if it is all part of the scheme

to discredit the Lockyer boats with the Government," said Herc.

"That's the way it strikes me, too. Are you through changing? Yes—so am I. Come on, we'll get Lieutenant Parry aside and tell him about it."

When they emerged into the cabin once more the two rescued men were seated on a divan, talking to the naval officer. Ned noticed that they were both dark, foreign-looking fellows, one of whom had a particularly sinister face, the evil expression of which was not relieved by a livid scar running down one side of his countenance, from his temple to his chin.

Both looked the very picture of dejection. Just as miserable and forlorn-appearing as two men might have been expected to be who had just lost a valuable boat. The better to act their part, they were speaking about demanding damages as the boys came up. Nor had they forgotten to express a proper amount of surprise at finding themselves on board a submarine craft.

But, as our readers will suppose, their plight

created no sympathy in the hearts of Ned and Herc. In fact, it was all the red-headed lad could do—he admitted afterward—to restrain himself from jumping on the scarred man and giving him a sound thrashing.

“Can we speak to you a moment, sir?” asked Ned, saluting as they came up.

“Certainly, Strong,” said the officer, facing around and looking rather surprised; “what is it?”

“Something to do with the machinery, sir. Can you step this way a minute?”

Seeing by the look in Ned’s eyes that he had something of importance to communicate, the officer followed the boys across the cabin and through the bulkhead door separating it from the engine room.

“Now, Strong, what is it?” he asked as Ned carefully closed the door behind them and led the way to a leather-covered divan, on which the engineer was wont to sit in the intervals of his duty. Just now, however, both he and his crew

were busy about the engines, and paid little attention to the intruders in their realm.

"It's about those two men, sir."

"Those two poor Italians, you mean?"

"Poor Italians, nothing—that is, I beg your pardon, sir," burst out Herc; "but if we are not mistaken, they are two precious rascals who have the destruction or injury of the submarine in their black hearts."

"What!" exclaimed the amazed officer; "explain yourself at once, Taylor."

But it was Ned who told the story. The red-headed Herc was too explosive with indignation to relate it coherently. The officer listened attentively, but in silence. When Ned had quite finished he spoke:

"You have been of inestimable service to-night, boys," he said; "there is no doubt in my mind, from what you have told me, that those ruffians have some scheme in mind. But what can it be? They cannot hope to harm the engines or any of the machinery, for it is all closely guarded while we are cruising."

"It occurred to me, sir," said Ned soberly, "that it might be a good idea to get hold of and examine that box they brought on board. It didn't look just natural, sir, for a man, whose boat has capsized, to have presence of mind enough to still retain possession of a box in the way those fellows did."

"That's right, my boy," responded the officer; "but the question is, how are we going to get a chance to examine it? We cannot seize these men by force on the mere suspicion that they are ruffians—although I think that fact is pretty well established. Then, too, any sort of disturbance on board on this critical night would interfere with the tests and, perhaps, ruin our friend Lockyer's chances to dispose of his boats."

"That is so," agreed Ned soberly; "but, sir, I've been thinking of a plan by which we can get access to the box. Taylor and I have the graveyard watch at eight bells (midnight.) You will be in charge of the vessel at that hour. Now, if I give an alarm that the boat is sinking, we can get those fellows out of their cabin, and while

they are outside, Taylor and I can slip in and examine that box."

"A splendid idea, Strong; but how are we to avoid waking the others?"

"We will only pound on their door, sir. They will naturally imagine that the others have also been called."

"Strong, it seems to me that your plan is a perfect one. In case there is nothing in the box we can say that it was a false alarm that roused us out."

"And in case there is?" asked Ned solemnly.

"The United States Navy has a way of dealing with such men," was the grim reply.

"Oh, Mr. Parry!" came a hail from the conning-tower at this moment.

"Yes, sir," rejoined the officer, springing to the foot of the steel ladder, as he recognized Captain McGill's voice.

"The hour on the surface is up. Will you have the necessary orders given for submersion?"

"Aye, aye, sir!" came the brisk response.

Instantly sharp commands rang out through

the submarine. There was a clamor of metal and a hissing of intake valves as the salt water rushed into the submersion tanks. In the engine room, speed was reduced almost to the neutral point as the diving vessel sank. As her floors slanted and the downward, forward rush began, the dial hand on the wall of the cabin began to move.

Ten—twelve—twenty—forty — fifty — sixty, seventy-one hundred fathoms, and still it crawled round the gauge.

“We are going lower than we ever have before,” exclaimed Ned to Herc, as the two met and passed in the cabin on their way to their different stations.

“Gosh!” laughed Herc; “I hope we come up again.”

The two men on the divan exchanged a significant look.

“You’ll come up again,” muttered the one called Guiseppi, “but the days of the Lockyer are numbered, so make the most of her while she lasts.”

CHAPTER XXII.

AN INFERNAL MACHINE.

“What depth, Mr. Stark?”

Captain McGill, standing by the side of the young midddy, asked the question. They were still running under water, but the air, which had just been changed, was as fresh as if they were on the surface. A heavy vibration was noticeable though as the powerful engines forced the cigar-shaped craft through the tremendous pressure of the lower waters.

“Hundred fathoms, sir,” was the rejoinder.

The naval officer glanced at his watch. Then his eyes fell on the distance recorder.

“We’ve run forty miles at that depth,” he said, “but keep her submerged. This was to be a thorough test.”

“She’s having it, sir,” ventured the midshipman; “we must be out of the Sound and under the Atlantic by this time.”

"Well, we left Block Island some miles to our stern quite a little while ago," was the reply. "It's a queer thing to think that there may be some big liner's keel right above us at this moment."

"It is, indeed, sir," agreed Mr. Stark. Just then, Mr. Lockyer and Lieutenant Parry, with other members of the testing party who had been below examining the engines, entered the conning-tower. They reported everything as working to the pitch of satisfaction.

"Well, Mr. Lockyer, I congratulate you, sir," said Captain McGill ponderously. "I think that your craft will prove a magnificent success. There is only one thing now to test her at, and that is to ascertain how she stands the vibrations set up by torpedo firing."

"If we could run across a derelict——," began Midshipman Stark.

"Good gracious, young man, I hope we do no such thing," laughingly exclaimed Captain McGill; "at this depth, and at ten miles an hour, we would never reach the surface to tell the tale.

However, that does not prevent me from admitting that I'm exceedingly sleepy. Gentlemen, it is almost eight bells. Suppose we turn in for a nap. We can be called if anything occurs."

"This traveling under water seems to affect one's wakefulness," yawned one of the board. "I think your suggestion is an excellent one, captain."

Soon afterward, leaving orders to be summoned at once if anything out of the way occurred, the officers composing the board retired to their staterooms. Quarters were close on the Lockyer, but room had been found for all. The two apparent castaways had gone to their stateroom some time before.

"Ding-ding! Ding-ding! Ding-ding! Ding-ding!"

The ship's bell clock sounded out eight bells. Ned and Herc, on watch in the conning-tower, exchanged significant glances. Midshipman Stark was at the wheel, but knowing nothing of the plans on foot, the chiming of the hour meant

nothing to him, but that the night was slipping by extremely slowly.

As the last strokes of the bell died away, a hail of "all's well" came from the engine room.

It was echoed from the conning-tower, where the boys stood with beating hearts. The hour that was to witness their ruse had struck. Presently Lieutenant Parry's foot sounded on the rounds of the steel ladder.

"Strong and Taylor, come below," he ordered, in a sharp voice. His tones were low, however.

Both boys instantly obeyed. Their hearts beat a little faster than usual as they descended into the cabin. They were about to attempt a somewhat risky bit of business. Both the supposed plotters were desperate-looking men, and the conversation the lads had overheard did not lead them to suppose that the additions to the Locker's company were any less bad than they looked.

"Now, I'll go to the door," said the officer, as the two young blue-jackets faced him, "and give the alarm. Then you leave the rest to me, but

the instant the cabin is empty, you dive in there and examine the box."

The boys nodded.

"Aye, aye, sir!" they said, as if they had received a routine order of some sort.

The officer crossed the cabin floor in a couple of strides. Going to the door of the two Italians, he turned the handle. It was unlocked. Fortune favored him then. He could arouse them without awakening anyone else. But as he opened the door a strange thing happened. One of the men sprang suddenly upright and, for an instant, seemed to be about to spring at the officer's throat. The next instant he subsided with a low laugh.

"Pardon, sir; I——."

"Yes, yes, I know," burst out Lieutenant Parry, in an excited voice, which was excellently assumed; "never mind that now. Get up! Quick! The submarine is in peril!"

"In peril! Santa Maria!"

The fellow sprang from his bunk. It could then be seen that he was fully dressed. His com-

panion, also, must have been feigning sleep, for he, too, was up in an instant. He, likewise, was fully dressed.

"Oh, sir, we are in danger?" he gasped.

"The greatest. Come quick!"

Lieutenant Parry seized both the men in an iron grasp and rushed them out of the cabin. He was afraid if they lingered they might stop to pick up the box.

"This way! This way! Quick! Pray heaven we are not too late!" he cried, as he hustled them through the engine-room door, closing it behind them with a loud clang.

"*Now!*" exclaimed Ned, "we've not a minute to lose."

Followed by Herc, he darted forward like a hound that has just picked up a hot scent.

Another instant and they were in the cabin lately occupied by the two Italians. Ned thrust an arm under the lower bunk. As he had expected, the box was there—a stout, black receptacle, bound at the corners with brass.

It had a lock on, but drawing his marlin-spike

knife, Ned had it burst open in an instant. As he broke the lock there was a loud snap and a queer sound like the ticking of a loud clock was heard.

Tick-tock! Tick-tock!

Ned threw back the lid, and as the contents of the box lay before him, he gave a gasp. At first sight the interior of the thing looked not unlike the works of a clock. It was this machinery that was ticking. In one corner was a tiny hammer, raised above what seemed to be a percussion cap. Below this cap was a thick, gelatinous-looking stuff. As he saw this latter, Ned gave a cry, and thrusting his hand into the box, tore the machinery out of it and hurled it clean across the cabin.

"An infernal machine!" he gasped.

"What!" almost screamed Herc.

"Don't you see," shouted Ned excitedly; "this yellow stuff is nitro-glycerine. Enough to blow this boat to pieces. That clockwork, when set going, would, in due time, bring the hammer

down on the percussion cap, touching off the diabolical affair, and——”

Before he could utter another word something sprang on him, encircling his neck, ape-like, with long arms. Ned saw a bright thing flash above him. Instinctively, he knew that it was a knife. Swiftly he threw up one arm and caught the descending blade in the nick of time. At the same instant, a scream of baffled rage rang out, as strong arms seized Guiseppi, who had sprung upon him, and dragged him off the Dreadnought Boy's back.

In the doorway of the engine room Ignacio struggled, foaming and blaspheming, in Engineer Bowler's grip, but the husky ex-foreman held him fast.

“Don't squirm too lively, you bloomin' dago,” he muttered, “or I might get nervous and tap you on the head with a wrench.”

Held tightly by Lieutenant Parry and two members of the engine-room crew, Guiseppi, who had made the murderous attempt on Ned, writhed and flung himself about with equal vehemence.

"I had hardly gotten them into the engine room," explained the young officer, giving the recalcitrant Guiseppi's arm a twist, "before they discovered it was all a trick. I suppose they knew, in a flash, the object of it, for before I could stop him, this ruffian here had darted through the door and sprang upon your back."

"You were just in time, sir," said Ned; "I could hear that knife whistle as he plunged it down. He fairly had me in chancery, too."

"I fancy you were just in time, too, Ned," said the young officer warmly.

He shuddered as he spoke. But now stateroom doors began to fly open, and heads were poked out. Presently, the entire naval board was hearing the story, while Midshipman Stark, at the wheel, strained his ears to hear what he could of it. For he had heard the disturbance, but, of course, could not leave his post. It was his duty to stick at the wheel, even if he had known that the submarine was about to be blown up.

"It seems to me," said Captain McGill, when he had heard Lieutenant Parry's story, "that

these two lads are entitled to a great deal of credit for the part they played in this affair. They not only acted bravely, but with discretion, which is better than mere courage. You, too, Parry, did a clever thing. I think, gentlemen, that all three are to be congratulated for securing a pair of precious scoundrels."

The two Italians were then, at Captain McGill's orders, triced up to stanchions. Bound securely, they glowered at their captors furiously, but for some time refused to speak. At last, Ignacio, in response to Captain McGill's questioning, confessed the whole plot.

They had been hired by Ferriss and Camberly—whose shipyard they had formerly worked in—to carry out the daring plan to wreck the Lockyer. Knowing that they could not get on board by any ordinary means, they had chartered the catboat and purposely capsized her, so that they would have to be taken on board. Their plan had then been to wait till she was in port and then set the machine among her engines, wrecking them hopelessly. Both men denied

that they had intended to take any lives. But, in view of the amount of nitro-glycerine contained in their machine, it was practically certain that anyone who had the misfortune to be on board at the time it exploded, would have been, if not killed, seriously injured.

As soon as this confession had been extorted from the men it was set down in writing, and they were compelled to sign it. The submarine was then headed for the surface, and the nitro-glycerine gingerly carried on deck and dumped overboard.

"I don't care to be shipmates with the stuff in that form many minutes longer than I have to be," said Captain McGill, amid a general laugh, in which, perhaps, there was a little of the trace of the nervous strain which they had undergone.

At Mr. Lockyer's request, the two Italians were questioned as to the whereabouts of Ferriss and Camberly, but they professed ignorance of where their employers were to be found. They were to have recovered their money by mail, they de-

clared, but as a considerable sum was found on them, it was always supposed that they received some of their pay for their rascally attempt in advance.

"Well, gentlemen," announced Captain McGill, a short time later, "the tests, both on the surface, semi-submerged, and submerged, have been perfectly satisfactory. Let us now head about and give these rascals over to justice. If their purpose was to ruin the Lockyer submarine and prevent her sale to the Government, they have failed. I shall report her at Washington as an unqualified success."

"Thank you, sir!" said the inventor simply, and would have added more, but at this instant there came a sudden sharp hail from Tom Marlin, who had succeeded Midshipman Stark at the wheel.

"Something dead ahead, sir. I——"

Before he could complete the sentence there came a terrific shock. The submarine quivered from stem to stern under the stress of the blow.

The party had to clutch at handrails and projections to avoid being thrown flat.

"We've struck something!" shouted Mr. Locker. A terrible fear burned in his eyes as a wild confusion of shouts and cries arose from below.

The submarine slewed round drunkenly, and a rasping sound rang from her steel plates. The inventor, cool-headed despite his alarm for his craft, sprang to the engine controls. Rapidly, he spun the telegraph indicator.

"Back! Full speed astern!"

Again came that bumping, rasping sensation. It was as if the little vessel had struck a reef or a submerged rock, although the chart showed none in that part of the ocean.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE GRIM VISAGE OF DANGER.

Lieutenant Parry sprang toward the speaking tube connecting with the engine room. Already they could feel the tremor as the submarine was violently backed from whatever it was she had struck.

"Stand by your wheel," he flung at old Tom, as he jumped.

"Aye, aye, sir," was the steady reply. The weather-beaten old mariner's face might have been a mask carved out of mahogany for all the emotion it displayed.

"Below at the engines!" bawled Lieutenant Parry down the tube.

"Here, sir," came up the steady rejoinder from Bowler, and the officer rejoiced to note that his voice did not tremble or falter.

"Have we struck something, sir?"

"Yes. Stand by for signals," snapped the officer, dropping the tube.

It was typical of the spirit of the Navy, that after the first shock of amazement at the utterly unexpected, not a man on board who wore the uniform betrayed any signs of excitement. The officers gave quick commands. The men obeyed them without a word. But the two bound Italians poured out a flood of lamentations and cries.

"Go below and shut those fellows up!" ordered Captain McGill sharply.

"Aye, aye, sir," responded Herc, with alacrity, dropping below.

Going up to Guiseppi, the red-headed lad flourished his fist under his nose.

"Do you want this to collide with your yellow features?" he demanded.

"No, no, signor," wailed the wretch; "but what has happened? Are we going to drown? Oh, Santa Maria! tell us, for the mercy of heaven!"

"I don't know what's going to happen, except that if you don't shut up you'll get busted on the nose," grunted Herc; "you'll spend a few

years in jail, anyhow, so I don't see what it matters to you."

His threats proved effectual, coupled with his fierce looks, and the panic-stricken cowards subsided into whimperings and whinings like the lamentations of whipped curs. This duty attended to, Herc sprang up the ladder again, alert for orders.

"It's a derelict, sir," Ned was saying, as the Dreadnought Boy regained the conning-tower. "I can make out her masts and the outline of her hull."

"That's right," approved Captain McGill; "you have sharp eyes, my lad. It is a derelict."

"The question is, how badly are we damaged?" put in one of the naval officers. He spoke in quiet, level tones, though there was not a man in that conning-tower who did not realize that if any plates were badly sprung they were in deadly peril. The Lockyer was at least thirty miles off shore, and submarines carry no boats!

"Better make an investigation, sir," suggested Lieutenant Parry.

"By all means, Mr. Parry. Send forward to ascertain if any of the forward plates are sprung."

"Hum," exclaimed the officer to himself; "if they are, down we go to the bottom."

"Here, Strong," he went on aloud, "you and Taylor take a lantern. Make thorough examination of the peak. If you find anything wrong, report at once."

"Aye, aye, sir," cried the boys, and together they vanished.

Procuring a lantern from the engine room, they hastened forward on their errand.

"Is she badly damaged?" asked Bowler, as they left his domain.

"Don't know yet, old man," flung back Ned; "we're going to see."

"Well, if she is we're on the job," snapped Bowler, a determined look settling over his face. It would have gone hard with one of his crew who showed a sign of flinching in that dread moment, but his assistants were going about their tasks, oiling and feeling bearings, without a sign

but their intense pallor to show the strain under which they were laboring.

"Good thing we don't carry a crew of them fellows," muttered Bowler, as he glanced disgustedly at the whining, terrified Italians, bound fast to their stanchions in the cabin.

Through the forward bulkhead the boys hastened. They found the torpedo room in darkness. This looked bad, for the incandescents in there were supposed to be kept burning constantly.

"Guess a wire has snapped," surmised Ned; "that shows that we bumped that old derelict good and hard."

The walls of the place were beaded with moisture, condensed from the warmth within the hull and the chill of the waters without, but there was no sign of a leak. The floor was removable for such emergencies, and the lads soon had it torn up. Hither and thither Ned waved his lantern over the plates, but seemingly, they were all tight. All at once, Herc gave a startled cry. He pointed to a place where a tiny stream of water could be seen making its way through.

"So far as I can see, that's the only leak," said Ned; "the pumps can easily take care of that."

Further examination confirmed this diagnosis. That tiny leak was all the damage the submarine had sustained.

Ned hastened to the conning-tower and so reported. Immense relief was visible on the countenances of all as he told of the results of his investigation.

"Well, a miss is as good as a mile," said Captain McGill cheerily; "and we won't go to Davy Jones this cruise."

"I assume your pumps can take care of the leak, Mr. Lockyer?" asked one of the board.

"Yes, indeed," said the inventor; "the boat is so constructed that all leakage is drained to a central well. I'll pass word to the engine room to have the centrifugal pump set to work at once."

"Possibly we can caulk the leak temporarily," suggested Lieutenant Parry; "at any rate, there's no harm in trying."

"Right you are, Parry," assented Captain Mc-

Gill; "you and Mr. Lockyer go below. Make a thorough examination, and act according to your judgment."

"Aye, aye, sir," rejoined the young officer, saluting, and darting off on his errand, followed by Mr. Lockyer.

The submarine had been stopped by this time, and she now lay tossing on the surface of the waters, her engines silent and motionless, except for the hum of the dynamos. This latter sound suggested an idea to Captain McGill.

"Strong, do you understand the management of this craft's searchlight?" he inquired, turning to Ned.

"Yes, sir," rejoined Ned; "we learned how to work it as part of our duty before the Lockyer was launched."

"Then let's have some light on this obscure subject," said the officer. "I'm anxious to see what it was that came so near to sending us to the bottom."

Ned reached up and loosened an attachment at the top of the conning-tower. Instantly, raised

by strong springs, the searchlight, which differed in pattern from the ordinary kind, sprang out above the lookout place.

Then the Dreadnought Boy pressed a button. There was a sharp click and a dazzling, white pencil of radiance swept the dark ocean on which the Lockyer was rolling. Peering through the lenses, and shading his eyes with one hand while he worked a small wheel with the other, Ned swept the ray about till it suddenly fell on an object about two hundred yards away from them.

"There, sir, there she is," he exclaimed.

The officers peered through the glass ports of the conning-tower. They saw the brilliantly illuminated outlines of a large, water-logged craft, almost level with the water. From her decks three forlorn stumps of masts stood up as if in mute appeal. She was as sorry a looking derelict as one would wish to see. The winds and the waves had had their way with her and left only this battered hulk to drift about the ocean—a menace to navigation of the most dangerous kind.

"How long has she been adrift, Barnes, do you think?" asked Captain McGill, turning to an officer who stood beside him.

"Hard to say," rejoined the other; "perhaps for years. We collided with a junk once off the Pacific Coast. It had drifted clear across from China, and from papers found on her, it must have taken her fifteen years to do it."

"I guess we have all had our experience with derelicts," was the rejoinder; "they are the most dangerous things a seaman has to encounter."

"Especially when they are awash, like this hulk," was Captain Barnes's reply.

Lieutenant Parry and Mr. Lockyer returned at this point to report that an attempt would be made to caulk the leak temporarily till permanent repairs could be made. For the present, the pump would take care of the leakage.

The derelict, irradiated by the bright rays of the searchlight, was pointed out to the two investigators. They regarded it with interest, not unmixed with graver feelings. A little harder

bump against those water-logged sides and what tragedy of the ocean might not have resulted?

"Confound you!" exclaimed Mr. Lockyer impulsively, shaking his fist at the sinister object, as it heaved and rolled in a heavy, sodden way. "You came near to putting us out of commission. I'd like to send you to the bottom, where you belong."

"Come, Lockyer," laughed Captain McGill; "instead of feeling revengeful, you ought to offer a vote of thanks. This derelict has not only shown to us that your boat is as staunch and tough as she is swift and handy, but she is going to give us another opportunity we were wishing for."

"What is that, sir?" asked Lockyer, though he half-guessed the other's meaning.

"Why," responded the naval officer, "fate or luck, or whatever you like to call it, has thrown this derelict in our path. She is a serious menace to navigation. A less fortunate ship might strike her and be sent to the bottom. By the time a regular derelict destroyer could be notified, she

might have drifted off out of ken. Now, however, we have a chance to rid the ocean of her forever."

"You mean——," began Mr. Lockyer.

"That you carry torpedoes, Lockyer, and we were wishing an opportunity to test them. Here is a chance ready to our hands. What do you think of it?"

"That it would be a magnificent revenge, sir," was the prompt rejoinder.

A chorus of laughter and approval went up from the other officers. After a hasty consultation, it was agreed to gauge the distance and depth of the derelict, and then, withdrawing to a distance of four hundred yards, launch one of the Lockyer's deadly implements at her. The boys' eyes fairly shone with excitement, as they heard this. Torpedo work was very much to their liking.

"Mr. Parry, you will take Boatswain's Mates Strong and Taylor, and Bos'un Marlin, and attend to the torpedo launching. Mr. Stark, you will take the wheel. I will give you the signal when to fire, Mr. Parry."

Captain McGill gave a nod to show that his orders had been issued.

As Lieutenant Parry, the boys and old Tom vanished, he gave a sharp order.

"Astern, Mr. Stark."

The submarine began to glide backward once more.

"Stop her. Now, Mr. Lockyer, keep the searchlight on her while I get the range."

With a range-finding instrument the range was soon gauged.

"Now, Mr. Stark, you will drop to a depth of ten feet, if you please. I think that will be about her draught?" asked Captain McGill, turning to the other officers. They nodded. In backing from the derelict, a careful line had been kept, so that as she dropped, her nose was trained directly amidships on the peril of the seas. Before the submersion began, of course, the searchlight had been drawn in.

"Like the horns of a snail," was the way one of the onlookers expressed it afterward.

In the meantime, down in the torpedo room, some active work had been going on. By lantern-

light, for her electric connections had not yet been repaired, the boys and Tom Marlin, under Lieutenant Parry's direction, had slid one of the big, heavy, fourteen-foot Whiteheads from its shelf into a sort of conveyor. This carried it to the firing tube, the inner end of which the officer already had swung open.

"Ram home!" he ordered. The great, cigar-shaped projectile, with its tiny, fairy-like propellers and bright metal work gleaming wickedly, was slid into the tube. With a sharp click and snap the water-tight breach of the tube was at once closed. The torpedo was ready for firing.

Before ramming home, however, the "war head" had been placed in the implement. This means that the dummy-head had been removed and one charged with gun-cotton had been substituted for it. Vessels at sea do not carry war heads on their torpedoes. It would be too dangerous. The cap, full of disaster-wreaking explosive, is not put in place till they are to be used.

This done, Lieutenant Parry stood by the inner end of the tube, his hand on a lever. When this

was pulled, it would admit compressed air to the tube, which would simultaneously open the outer end of the contrivance and launch the torpedo. At the same time the pressure would keep the water out of the tube. The boys knew that in the Lockyer type of boat, besides the compressed air, the torpedo was helped on its way by a charge of the explosive gas being touched off behind it. This was effected by the compressed air on its being turned on, operating a small firing point, which sparked and instantly exploded the volatile stuff.

On the top of the torpedo was a small knob. As the torpedo was shot out of the tube, much as a bullet is shot from a rifle, this knob struck another projection on the inside of the tube. This set in motion the compressed-air engines within the torpedo, by which it was driven. At the same time it ignited an alcohol flame which superheated the compressed air, giving it added force.

With all in readiness, they waited breathlessly for the signal to come from above. Lieutenant Parry's foot tapped nervously, as they stood in silence. His eyes were fixed on a small incandes-

cent bulb, wired directly from the conning-tower. It would flash red when all was ready for him to pull the lever and release the instrument of destruction.

"We're sinking, sir," said Ned presently.

The officer merely nodded. The moment was a tense one. There is something to fire the dullest imagination in the idea, that by a mere twist of a wrist, one is presently to launch forth one of man's most effective engines of devastation.

Only the loud swishing of the water as it rushed into the tanks, broke the silence now. All at once, the downward motion—like the falling sensation of a slow elevator, ceased.

Suddenly, above the officer's head, there was a tiny, crimson flash.

It was the signal he had been waiting for.

Instantly his hand gave a backward jerk.

They could feel a slight jar as the torpedo, loaded with two hundred pounds of explosive, tore from the submarine on her errand of destruction.

Would she hit the mark?

CHAPTER XXIV.

MUTINY ON THE HIGH SEAS.

That question was soon answered when they reached the surface, and you may be sure that no time was lost in carrying out this maneuver. As the searchlight was sprung into place, on the top of the dripping conning-tower, its rays swept the sea for yards around. But of the derelict, that had recently floated, there was not a trace to be seen. Only some few timbers and a splintered plank or two were left to mark her passing.

"Wow!" whispered Herc, under his breath, to Ned; "it's kind of spooky, isn't it?"

"I don't know about that," laughed the other Dreadnought Boy; "but it's mighty effective. If this had been war, and that had been a foreign vessel, we'd have blown her up in just that way."

"I hope we get a chance to some day," exclaimed Herc.

But Ned's voice was very sober as he rejoined seriously:

"It's a mighty serious thing, Herc, to talk about jokingly. Hundreds of human beings would have gone to their reckoning if that vessel had been a warship. That's something to think over, isn't it?"

The Lockyer cruised about among the wreckage awhile longer so that the officers might judge for themselves just what had been the result of the torpedoing. All agreed that it was as effective a bit of work as they had ever seen done. It being decided then that the submarine had been put through about as severe a

series of tests as could be imagined, the order was given to put about and head back to Grayport.

The searchlight was extinguished, and the engines speeded up to twenty knots. Rushing along the surface, the Lockyer rapidly ate up the miles between herself and home. As she swept along, Mr. Lockyer's face was all aglow. In a quiet aside, Captain McGill had told him something concerning the report he was going to make to the Government. Whatever that something was, it had caused the inventor's eyes to fill with something else than gladness, as he seized Captain McGill's hand, and exclaimed in a voice that quivered:

"I've worked and waited for this many weary days, sir. It's the proudest moment of my life."

Somehow it seemed fitting, too, that the inventor's hopes and ambitions should come to their fruition out on the lonely sea, on board a craft being driven at racing speed by engines of his construction and design.

Block Island had been left off to starboard, and the choppy waters of the Sound were beginning to boil about them, when there came a hail from Midshipman Stark at the wheel.

"I can see the lights of a craft of some kind ahead, sir," he reported, turning to Lieutenant Parry.

"What is she?" was the rejoinder.

"Can't make out, sir. I—Jove, there goes a rocket. She's in distress of some kind!"

"That rocket was a distress signal, sure enough," rejoined Mr. Parry; "hand me those glasses, will you, Stark?"

Holding the wheel with one hand, the middy did as he was requested. Then his scrutiny returned to the lights of the distant vessel. As he gazed, another rocket soared up and spattered yellowy on the night—like an egg shattered against a blackboard.

"She's a big, white yacht, as nearly as I can make

out," said the lieutenant, after he had centered the glasses on the distant craft.

"Shall I head for her, sir?"

"By all means. Keep her on that course while I go below and consult Captain McGill."

The officer soon appeared in the conning-tower, with the other naval dignitaries. Captain McGill now took his turn at scrutinizing the yacht through the night glasses.

He set them down with an exclamation. The submarine was not more than a few hundred yards from the yacht now.

"Mutiny on board, by Jove!" exclaimed the officer.

"Mutiny, sir?"

"Aye, aye, Parry! We must lay alongside. I can see an old gentleman and a girl on the stern deck. They seem to have been driven there, for the crew are lined up at the break in the deck, and appear to be threatening them."

"Great Scott," cried one of the other officers. "Mutiny on the high seas! It's our clear duty to quell the disturbance and capture the rascals."

"Right you are, Conover, and we're going to do it," spoke up Captain McGill. "Mr. Lockyer, will you manage the searchlight, please? Mr. Parry, please pass the word below for your capable young men. Send them on deck, and tell them to station themselves there waiting orders."

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"This certainly is the eventful night," exclaimed Ned, as he and Herc, with old Tom close behind, emerged on deck and saw what was going forward.

"It looks like a big night to-night," hummed Herc blithely. The prospect of a fight was always a delight to the red-headed youth, and things certainly seemed to be "freezing up for one," as old Tom put it.

Inside the conning-tower excitement was at its height

tension now. As they drew near and the white pencil of the searchlight shot out, bathing the yacht in its white brilliancy, the vessel began to slip through the water.

"Ha! Those scoundrels are trying to slip away, but they don't know what they're up against," said Captain McGill, his lips compressing grimly. "More speed, please, Mr. Stark."

The middy's hand shot out and touched the telegraph lever. Instantly, down in the engine room, cranks began to revolve faster. A quiver ran through the Lockyer as, like an unleashed greyhound, she leaped forward.

But as they neared the yacht, overhauling her in leaps and bounds, it began to look as if they might be too late. The old gentleman was seen to raise a pistol and fire. At the same instant a sharp, crackling volley burst from the mutineers. They saw the girl, who wore a white yachting suit, turn despairingly, her face set toward the oncoming submarine, as if in mute appeal. As the searchlight bathed her features, Lockyer gave a sharp cry.

"Great Heavens! It's Miss Pangloss and her father!" he cried.

"Steady on, Lockyer!" whispered Parry, placing his arms about the inventor. "We'll be alongside in a minute, old man."

"Heaven grant we may not be too late," breathed the inventor. In the darkness of the conning-tower he shook like a leaf. But his gaze never left the intense scene on the after deck of the yacht. Its details shone up in the searchlight's radiance as if it had been a picture on a lighted stage.

"Give them a hail, Parry," ordered Captain McGill, as the submarine crept in alongside the moving yacht.

"Ahoy, on the yacht!" came the lieutenant's voice; "heave to immediately."

"You go to blazes!" shouted a bloated-faced fellow, leaning over the rail, and shaking his fist menacingly.

"Yes, get out if you know what's good for you butinskis," roared another man, joining the first.

"This is a fair warning, men," exclaimed Lieutenant Parry. "This vessel is a naval craft. If——"

"Oh, come off! That's no naval craft. Where's your pretty uniform?" jeered the mutineers. Then, from the bloated-faced man came a sharp order.

"If those fellows try to board us, fill them full of lead."

"Looks as if we've tackled a tougher proposition than we thought, sir," said Lieutenant Parry, addressing Captain McGill, whose head now projected above the open top of the conning-tower.

"For heaven's sake, gentlemen, whoever you are, lay alongside," appealed the elderly man, whom, it could now be seen by all who knew him, was, indeed, Mr. Pangloss. The apostle of peace seemed transfigured, however. His eyes blazed, and his white hair stood out like a mane. In his hand he held a revolver. It was doubtless this weapon that had so far held the mutineers back.

"Blow the rascals to the sky!" he shouted angrily, shaking his fist at them menacingly.

As for the girl, she stood erect and apparently fearless. Channing Lockyer's eyes dwelt admiringly on her brave, defiant form. But the old man's words proved a reminder to the mutineers that they were neglecting their mission of loot and plunder. With a yell, they charged aft as he shouted his defiance.

CHAPTER XXV.

MR. LOCKYER CAPTURES A PRIZE.

But a sharp voice rang out from the deck of the submarine.

"Stop where you are!"

"Well, what is it now, Mister Bluff?" shouted the bloated-faced man.

"You'll find out how much of a bluff we are," snapped the officer. "Strong, pass the word below to load the torpedo tube."

Ned, carrying out what he guessed was a cleverly thought-up plan to rout the mutineers, sprang to the side of the conning-tower.

"Below there!" he hailed. Then he paused, as if listening for a reply. "Stand by to load the torpedo tube. Hold your fire till you get the word."

"Aye, aye," roared up Midshipman Stark, from his station at the wheel.

"Now then, sir," cried Parry, hailing the old man, "you and the lady buckle on life preservers and jump overboard. We'll pick you up."

"W-w-w-what are you going to do, sir?" quavered the apostle of peace.

"Blow that vessel and those mutineers sky high!" exclaimed the young officer.

"Hurray!" cheered Ned, Herc and Tom, in ferocious voices.

The mutineers began to waver. The submarine folks could see the bloated-faced man trying to rally them, but he failed. A dozen of them rushed to the

rail. Their faces shone ghastly white in the search-light.

"For heaven's sake, don't fire, sir!" they begged.

"We'll surrender!" shouted another, waving a white dish-rag.

"Then throw your arms overboard!"

A succession of splashes followed. The mutineers couldn't seem to get rid of them fast enough.

"Stand by to catch a line," then roared the officer; "we're coming alongside."

"Aye, aye, sir," called back the cowed mutineers, as the submarine crept up to the yacht's side. An instant later she was fast, and her officers and crew were on the yacht's deck. Channing Lockyer at once made aft, followed by most of the officers. The latter were naturally anxious to ascertain the cause of the trouble. The inventor was drawn by a different motive—one we can guess.

In the meantime, the mutineers were driven forward and imprisoned in the forecastle. This done, Lieutenant Parry and the boys were making for the stern of the vessel, when Ned's keen eyes noticed the canvas cover over one of the yacht's boats shake and quiver as if something alive were under it.

Darting forward, he pulled it back and beheld, snuggled down among the thwarts of the boat, two human figures.

"Two more of them here, sir!" he cried.

The officer and Ned's mates were at his side in an instant. In spite of the crouching fellows' kicks and protests, they soon had them hauled out and on the decks. They tried to hide their faces, but they were remorselessly switched round and made to face the light.

"Tom Gradbarr!" exclaimed Ned, recognizing his captive.

"Zeb Anderson, by the big snapping turtle of the

South Pole!" yelled Herc, as he made a similar discovery that his prisoner was not unknown to him.

As neither of the rascals would utter a word, Lieutenant Parry decided to go aft at once after they had been secured, and try to get an explanation of how they came to be in the yacht's crew. As the party reached the after deck they found old Mr. Pangloss in the midst of a long explanation of how the trouble had come about. They had sailed from Narragansett the evening before. He meant to cruise down to Southern waters.

"But the mutiny, sir? What started it?" broke in Captain McGill impatiently, as the apostle of peace rambled along.

"Why, sir, I believe they must have been after my daughter's jewelry. She has \$150,000 worth on board."

"Permit me to say, sir, then, that I think that you have used very little judgment in taking such valuables to sea with you."

"Just what I told papa," put in the girl, who had been standing by the rail with Channing Lockyer, and seemed to have lost all interest in mutinies, or anything else.

"B-b-b-but they were in a safe," stuttered Mr. Pangloss, looking red and abashed.

"As if that would act as an obstacle, sir," said Captain McGill impatiently; "but your captain, where was he during all this trouble?"

"Why, sir, he left me at Narragansett," rejoined Mr. Pangloss. "He objected to my refusing to allow him to put two unruly members of the crew in irons. I decided to navigate the craft myself down to New York, where I would ship another skipper."

"Had you no other officers?"

"Oh, yes, a first mate named Gradbarr, and a second officer named Anderson."

Channing Lockyer started forward as he heard the names.

"Those rascals! Where are they? How did you get them on board?"

"Why, they applied for berths when we sailed from New York," rejoined Mr. Pangloss, "and——"

"They are both in irons forward," Lieutenant Parry finished for him.

"Thank goodness, they are captured," breathed Mr. Lockyer; "while they were at large I should never have drawn an easy breath. I always feared they would, in some way, harm the submarine."

"Then they would be attacking the property of the United States Government, Lockyer," laughed Captain McGill; "for I am going to recommend that eighteen similar craft to that little hooker alongside be built at once."

The inventor's face lit up. But the first person he turned to was Miss Pangloss. She met his gaze delightedly. As for the young lady's father, he looked fairly staggered.

"I think you told me, Lockyer, that those submarines could be built for \$200,000 apiece?"

"Yes, sir," nodded the radiant inventor.

"That's \$2,160,000!" gasped the old man.

"Your figures are correct, sir," said Captain McGill dryly; "and the nation owning such boats gets them cheap, in my opinion."

"Lockyer!" cried the old man, approaching the inventor with outstretched hand, "I have been unjust to you in the past. Forgive and forget. For my part, after what I have seen, I am willing to admit that submarines, besides being needful in war, have occasions of usefulness in peace."

"Their lawful occasions, eh?" quoted Lieutenant Parry, from the sea service.

"The Lockyer has proved that twice," put in Mr. Stark.

"Parry, what's the nearest harbor? It's important that we should land those rascals and the Italians, and give them into the hands of the police," said Captain McGill presently.

"We can make for Stonington, sir," was the reply. "There's Fisher Island light off our port-bow now."

"Then put us in there. It will be daylight in a short time," ordered Captain McGill. "Strong, you, Taylor and Marlin will remain on board as a prize crew. Mr. Lockyer," this with a smile at the inventor and the girl, "you will also remain to take care of your own particular prize. Gentlemen, let us re-embark on board the latest addition to the United States Navy—the submarine wonder, the Lockyer."

* * * * *

Well, as Tom Marlin would say, "the yarn is spun." It may be set down here, however, that all concerned in the mutiny got their just deserts. Although an effort was made to ascertain from Gradbarr and Anderson something relating to the whereabouts of Feriss and his rascally accomplice, Camberly, nothing could be got from them, except a vague statement that both men had gone to the Far East. The Atlas Works were seized by creditors, and the two submarines found there sold for junk.

As for Gradbarr and Anderson, they admitted their object in shipping on board Mr. Pangloss's yacht was to evade the police who, they felt sure, must be hot on their trail after the abduction of Mr. Lockyer and Ned. Incidentally, they are probably the first criminals ever brought to justice through the instrumentality of a submarine boat.

In spick and span uniforms, our friends attended the wedding of Channing Lockyer and Miss Pangloss.

and the speech the former apostle of peace made at the wedding breakfast astonished and shocked his old admirers; for it dealt with the necessity of being in constant preparation for trouble, so that if we did have to fight, we could fight to win. His resignation was immediately demanded by half-a-dozen peace societies, but he stuck to his guns, and the United States Navy now has no stauncher friend than Peregrine Pangloss.

On the festive day, too, it might have been noticed that Ned and Herc both wore small, glittering objects affixed to their uniforms during the ceremony.

These were tiny gold and diamond submarine boats. On the back of each was an inscription:

"From Channing Lockyer to the Dreadnought Boys, in partial recognition of the valued services they rendered him during a trying time."

Though each had protested, the inventor also insisted on starting a good, fat bank-account for each boy, not forgetting Tom Marlin. So that, with what they already have in the Navy Savings Bank, Ned and Herc feel, to express it in their own words, "like bloated millionaires."

But both lads would gladly give up all their bright prospects to-morrow if their retention of them depended on their leaving the service. They would rather be serving Uncle Sam on the seas than be millionaires twenty times over. In this Sim Phillips agrees with them. He is now superintendent of the busy Lockyer Submarine Boat Works, but he considers himself quite a part of the Navy, inasmuch as all the boats the Works turn out are for Uncle Sam.

But modern as the Lockyer is, she doubtless will be superseded by other and newer craft. Indeed, Mr. Lockyer is now working on various improvements, which are to be embodied in his latest invention. "The old order changes" more frequently in things naval and military than in almost any other branch of life.

While some of the brightest minds in the country were working on submarine problems, others had been busy trying to solve the problems of the air.

How the United States Navy experimented with aerial craft and what part our Dreadnought Boys played in the interesting, exciting campaign of innovation, our readers may learn by perusing the next volume of this series—a description of thrilling aerial adventures and perils for the honor of Uncle Sam—THE DREADNOUGHT BOYS ON AERO SERVICE.

THE END.

